

THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION AND VFX

January
2013

ANIMATIONTM

MAGAZINE



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THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION AND VFX

January
2013

ANIMATIONTM MAGAZINE

**The Return of
The Snowman
and The Littlest
Pet Shop**

+

**The Visual Wonders
of Life of Pi**

\$7.95 U.S.



**From Up on
Poppy Hill:
Goro Miyazaki's
Valentine to a
Gone-by Era**

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For the titular hero Norman, the filmmakers created 8,800 faces,
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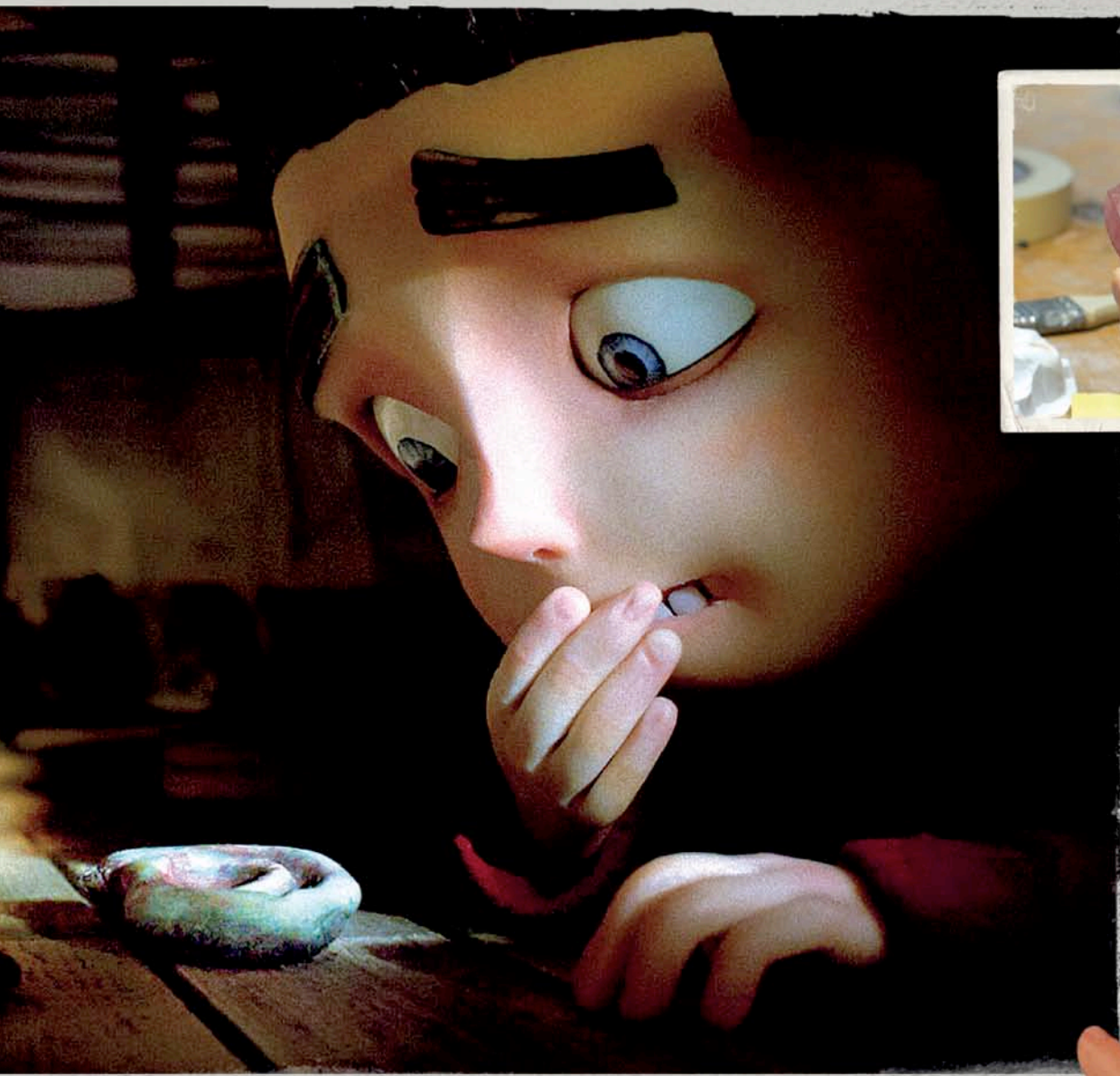
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FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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CLEESE

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A Liar's AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The Untrue Story of MONTY PYTHON'S Graham Chapman

BRAINSTORM MEDIA and EPIX present with TRINITY FILM A BILL & BEN PRODUCTION GRAHAM CHAPMAN "A LIAR'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY - THE UNTRUE STORY OF MONTY PYTHON'S GRAHAM CHAPMAN"
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EDITED BY JUSTIN WILYERS. PRODUCTION DESIGNER MARGARITA DOYLE. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARK SANDWELL, MEL VERNER, STEVEN SHAWARSTEIN, MARK GREENBERG, DOUGLAS A. LEE, AURELIO LANDOLT, HANS-PETER JÄGER. PRODUCED BY BILL JONES
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OFFICIAL SELECTION 2012

"...each segment has its own broadly cartoonish, generally heavily graphic visual style, as befits a professional funnyman..."

The New York Times



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Savannah College of Art and Design leads the way in offering courses on stereoscopic filmmaking and imaging. [by Ellen Wolff]

52 A Day in the Life of ...

This month we join Genevieve Webster and Michael De Souza's chart-topping reggae rodent *Rastamouse* on his daily adventures thanks to producers Three Stones Media.



Take Home Ted for Free in December!

This month, we are giving away five copies of Seth MacFarlane's *Ted* on Blu-ray/DVD (available on Dec. 11, from Universal Home Ent., \$34.98). Check out our website for news, views and weekly prize giveaways.

Visit www.animationmagazine.net every day for chances to win cool toon-related prizes



Cover: GKIDS will wide release Studio Ghibli's *From Up on Poppy Hill* in March.

For Your Consideration: Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Frankenweenie* and Disney-Pixar's *Brave*.

EDITOR'S LETTER



A good friend always used to complain about her maddening schedule in December. One of her big gripes was that the studios waited until the holiday shopping season to unload all their biggest, brightest movie releases. "Why don't they spread the goods evenly all year round, so that we can get our holiday shopping and entertaining done without having to worry about catching up with all the award-worthy releases playing in theaters?"

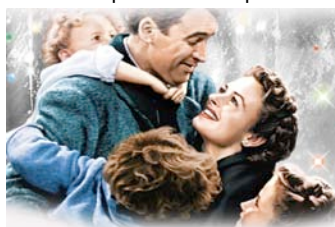
Of course, we all know that the award season logistics have made it a necessity for the studios to unleash their top guns in November and December. Call it the year-end squeaky wheel gets the Oscar oil. The fresher the movie is in the voters' minds, the better its chances are of getting the nod when the numerous awards' envelopes are opened in January and February.

Having covered most of the big studio movies such as Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* and DreamWorks' *Rise of the Guardians* in previous months, we decided to devote our cover story this month to GKIDS' *From Up on Poppy Hill*, which was released in Japan in 2011, but is getting an Oscar-qualifying run in the U.S. this month. Our sources tell us that Goro Miyazaki's acclaimed movie will get its official theatrical release in March of 2013, so you can consider Charles Solomon's excellent article on the making of the film a special sneak peek. Over this past year, we already covered GKIDS' other hot Oscar contenders—*The Painting*, *Zarafa* and *The Rabbi's Cat*—in the pages of our magazine, so if you'd like to learn more about these beautifully crafted, handmade films, make sure to visit our website and order our back issues at www.animationmagazine.net/shop.

Tom Whalen's poster for *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

Adding to this issue's festive holiday spirit are two pieces on TV specials that remind us why we all love to bundle up and stay home after a tough day of fighting crowds in shopping malls. We got a chance to chat with the team at L.A.'s own Screen Novelties, the creative team behind this year's stop-motion special *It's a SpongeBob Christmas!* We also lucked out and managed to snag an interview with Camilla Deakin, the co-founder of London's Lupus Films, who produced the new British holiday special *The Snowman and the Snowdog*. Let's hope that U.S. broadcasters will jump on it and buy the rights for a holiday 2013 airdate stateside.

After all is said and done, it's better to have an abundance of animated entertainment choices in December. Just like smart chipmunks like Chip 'n' Dale, we can store the good finds for the future. Hang on to the good DVDs, and pay-per-views for the first quarter of the year, when really awful movies haunt the theaters. Meanwhile, don't forget to use these final weeks of the year to share meaningful moments with your loved ones, savor the family meals and enjoy a nostalgic holiday movie or two on TV together. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to watch *It's a Wonderful Life* for the umpteenth time and hear Clarence the angel tell George Bailey once again, "You've really had a wonderful life. Don't you see what a mistake it would be to just throw it away?"



It's a Wonderful Life

Ramin

Ramin Zahed
Editor-in-Chief
rzahed@animationmagazine.net

Quote of the Month

"The two best animation studios in the world, DreamWorks and Pixar, are in a transition period where they are obliged to invent new things so that they don't repeat the same film all the time. More than ever, even in its business aspects, animation needs inventiveness and artists. I'm very curious to find out what will happen in the coming years."

— Joann Sfar, co-director, producer and writer of *The Rabbi's Cat*



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IS STUNNING!**

With sweeping visuals director
Peter Ramsey skillfully works in
a lot of heart and humor.

It’s the perfect holiday family movie.”

Pete Hammond, DEADLINE HOLLYWOOD



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RISE OF THE GUARDIANS



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2 The year's first DVD releases are a wild mix: *Dino Dan: To Catch a Dino*, *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That: Hurray It's Valentine's Day* and *Being Human: The Complete Second Season*.



3 Keep an eye on the news today as **Producers Guild of America** announces its five Animated Feature nominations.



3-14 The **Palm Springs International Film Festival** features a fantastic collection of films and shorts from all over the globe this week. (psfilmfest.org)



4 Nothing says the new year is here like the release of *Texas Chainsaw 3D*, a new take on the classic Tobe Hooper horror film about the homicidal Sawyer family.

7 **VES Awards** nominations are announced today. (visualeffectssociety.com)



8 **BAFTA** noms are announced today. New DVD picks of the week are *Archer: The Complete Season 3* and *Tiny Toon Adventures: Crazy Crew Rescues*.



10 After months of campaigning and guessing by so-called award gurus, we finally get to find out which five animated features make the **Oscar** nomination list.



11 *A Haunted House* offers a new spoof on the *Paranormal Activity* series, starring Marlon Wayans and Cedric the Entertainer.



11-20 The **Flickerfest Short Film Festival** in Sydney, Australia, offers a healthy dose of animated projects. (flickerfest.com.au)



13 Funny ladies Tina Fey and Amy Poehler host the annual **Golden Globe Awards** at the Beverly Hills Hilton. Yup, they give out a Best Animated Feature Globe, too.



15 *The Amazing World of Gumball: The Mystery* and *SpongeBob SquarePants: Extreme Kah-Rah-Tay* lead the list of this week's cool animated DVD releases. Also available today: *Merlin: The Complete 4th Season*.



17-27 New indie animated short filmmakers will find their way to the annual **Sundance Film Festival** in Park City, Utah this week. (sundance.org/festival)



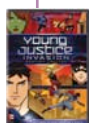
18 Arnold Schwarzenegger returns to the screen in *The Last Stand*, playing a tough-as-nails sheriff who takes on a notorious drug kingpin. Directed by Kim Ji-Woon. Also opening today is the supernatural thriller *Mama*, exec produced by Guillermo del Toro.



18-24 If Sundance is way too hip and crowded for you, why not give Park City's **Slamdance** festival a try this year? (slamdance.com)



22 *Iron Man: Armored Adventures Season 2, Vol. 3*; *Pokemon Black & White Set 2* and *Young Justice Invasion: Destiny Calling, Season 2, Part 1* are all available for your at-home viewing pleasure.



25 Need another kick-ass version of a classic fairy tale? How about *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters*, directed by Tommy Wirkola and starring Jeremy Renner and Gemma Arterton as the brother-and-sister team who are out to get even with their former captor. Jason Statham and Jennifer Lopez—need we say more? OK...they are starring in *Parker*, the new adaptation of the best-selling crime thrillers by Donald E. Westlake.



28-30 Miami Beach's Fontainebleau Resort hosts the 2013 edition of the **NATPE** content market. (natpe.org)



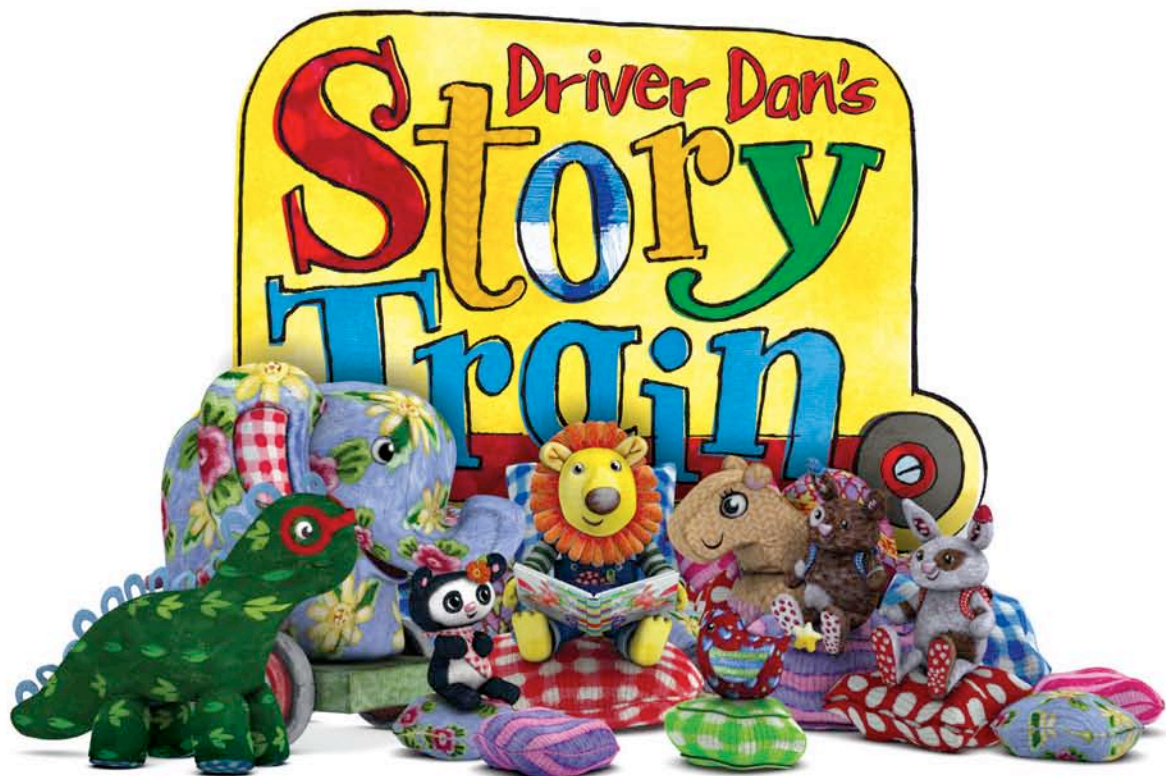
1963 - 2013
CONTENT FIRST

29 You can sink your teeth into Genndy Tartakovsky's *Hotel Transylvania*, Sony's blockbuster hit of the fall season which is available today on DVD and Blu-ray. Also available today: *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, Part 2*; Michel Ocelot's *Tales of the Night* and *Thor: Legend of the Magical Hammer*.



To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail mercedes@animationmagazine.net.

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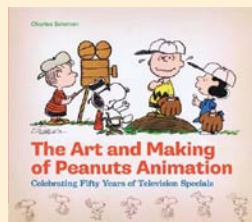
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The Art and Making of Peanuts Animation: Celebrating Fifty Years of Television Specials

By Charles Solomon
[Chronicle Books, \$45]

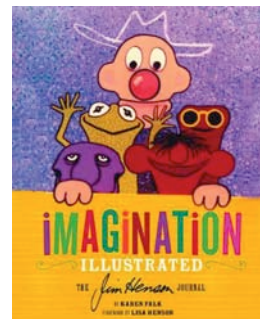


A *Charlie Brown Christmas* and *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* are probably two of the most popular and influential holiday TV specials in the history of animation. That's why it's such a huge treat to dive into animation expert Charles Solomon's beautiful and extensively researched new book about the creation of these important works by Bill Melendez, Lee Mendelson and their team. The richly illustrated

book tells the fascinating story of how Charles M. Schulz's beloved comic-strip characters made the leap from the page to the TV and movie screen and includes interviews with the directors and animators, voice actors and leading animation stars of today such as Ralph Eggleston, Andrew Stanton and Pete Docter as they look back at how these seminal works influenced them and other pop culture figures as a whole. "I never realized the impact our shows had on creators whom I admire so much," writes Mendelson in the book's foreword. Thanks to this wonderful book and its rich collection of insights, sketches, concept art, cels, storyboards and behind-the-scenes photos, the legacy of these animated gems is documented forever. It's a fine, fine art book, Charlie Brown!

Imagination Illustrated: The Jim Henson Journal

By Karen Falk
[Chronicle Books, \$29.95]

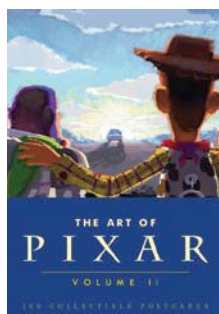


Although it's been over 22 years since the world lost Jim Henson to cancer, his legacy continues to live on with each passing year. In the new collection which is compiled from The Jim Henson Company archives, we get the rare chance to learn more about his genius and take in many of his visual inspirations, drawings, photographs and evocative doodles. This scrapbook style collection offers notes about the important accomplishments and dates in his life (compiled from Henson's notes from 1954 to 1988), accompanied by very cool original drawings of characters such as Oscar the Grouch, Snuffleupagus and Rowlf the Dog, as well as concept notes from *World of Woozles*, which became *Fraggle Rock*. Diehard fans can also take in early career trivia, and info about projects that never came to fruition such as a *Wizard of Id* series and a Muppet Broadway show. We can't think of any true Henson fan or pop culture connoisseur who wouldn't be delighted to add this volume to their collection. Pair this book with last year's *Doodling with Jim Henson* (Walter Foster, \$19.95) and the new anniversary DVD/Blu-ray of *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (Disney, \$19.99) and you can have yourself the perfect Henson-themed holiday season.

The Art of Pixar, Volume II: 100 Collectible Postcards

By Pixar Animation Studio
[Chronicle Books, \$18.95]

A few years ago, Chronicle came up with an awesome collection of postcards featuring storyboard art from the studio's earlier features such as *Toy Story*, *The Incredibles*, *Monsters, Inc.* and *Finding Nemo*. Since that edition was a huge hit for the publishing house, they are offering a second collection this year—and we couldn't be happier. Don't get us wrong—we love the finished, crystal-clear CG-animated movies as much as everyone else, but come on, how can we resist the crisp lines, the color scripts and the lively sketches that practically dance in front of our eyes? The 2012 collection features 100 individual cards graced with art from *Ratatouille*, *WALL•E*, *Up*, *Toy Story 3*, *Cars 2*, *Brave* and the 18 short films that were released after 2007. It's a good idea to buy two sets—one to use to send friends and [nice] family members and the other to decorate your office or cubicle walls!



The Storyboard Artist: A Guide to Freelancing in Film, TV and Advertising

By Giuseppe Cristiano
[Michael Wiese Productions, \$24.95]



One of the most important lessons animation and vfx professionals need to learn is the importance of polishing one's craft and increasing one's flexibility and hirability in today's ultra-competitive market. Giuseppe Cristiano is a skilled storyboard artist who has worked on numerous TV and feature projects around the world. He has decided to share some of the key ways of landing jobs as a storyboard artist with readers in this informative, well-illustrated book. Some of the points he brings up land on the obvious side; for example, he says it's a good idea to sit in the emergency seats on airplanes because they offer more leg room and you can sketch more freely when traveling. But he also shares valuable tips about how to use storyboards to figure out a project's budget, and stresses the importance of improving one's drawing skills and polishing anatomy, perspective and framing crafts. He also does a nice job of explaining movie terminology for beginners, but he is best when he is explaining the nuts and bolts of landing a gig, working with producers and directors in the real world and dealing with contracts and budgets.

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A Valentine to a Vanished Era

Goro Miyazaki's delicate, coming-of-age movie *From Up on Poppy Hill* offers a welcome respite from the loud, CG world of most American movies.
by Charles Solomon

Goro Miyazaki's gentle new film, *From Up on Poppy Hill* (*Kokuriko-Zaka Kara*), was the top-earning animated feature in Japan in 2011, grossing almost \$54 million and outdrawing two *Pokémon* features. It also won the Japan Academy Prize for Best Animated Feature, and U.S. audiences will finally be able to enjoy it on the big screen in the next few months.

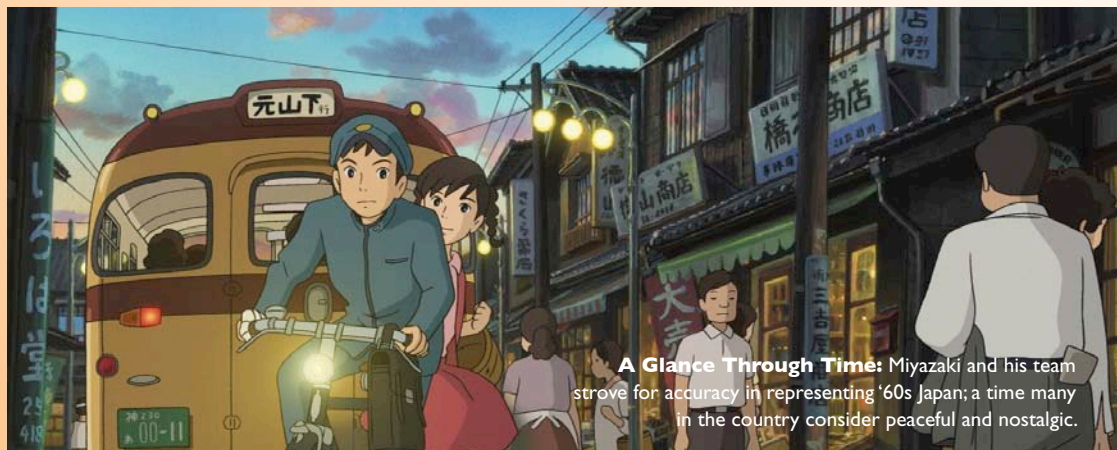
Set in early 1960s Japan, *Poppy Hill* is more intimate than Miyazaki's directorial debut, *Gedo Senki* or *Tales From Earthsea* (2006). Every morning before leaving for school, the industrious Umi Matsuzaki (voiced by Sarah Bolger) flies signal flags in the yard of her seaside home in Yo-

kohama in honor of her father, who was lost at sea during the Korean War. When she meets Shun Kazama (Anton Yelchin), the editor of their high school newspaper, she gets in-

involved in the efforts to preserve "the Latin Quarter:" Plans are afoot to demolish the beloved but dilapidated building that houses the school clubs. A believably awkward

romance quickly develops between these likable teenagers.

Although *Tales From Earthsea* was the biggest hit of the 2006 summer in Japan, earning more than 7.3 billion yen (about \$61.4 million), it received a cool reception in America. Fans of Ursula K. LeGuin complained about the liberties the fledgling director had taken with her much-loved *Earthsea* novels. *Poppy Hill* is a more assured film; its warmth and charm recall Yoshifumi Kondo's Studio Ghibli feature *Whis-*



A Glance Through Time: Miyazaki and his team strove for accuracy in representing '60s Japan; a time many in the country consider peaceful and nostalgic.



Young Romance: It was important for Miyazaki to avoid excess dialog, instead focusing on the characters' subtle expressions to tell the story.



per of the Heart (1995). After an Oscar-qualifying run, indie distributor GKIDS will release the film next March in the United States, where it should find a receptive audience, as it did in Europe.

Miyazaki talked about his new film in a recent interview conducted via e-mail, with help from translator Anna J. Takayama. In contrast to the dragon-haunted fantasy realm of *Earthsea*, *Poppy Hill* unfolds in everyday reality, which posed challenges for Miyazaki.

"I found it difficult to make a film that was set in an existing period and place," he recalls. "When I questioned how I could show the reality of this story, I thought about creating an animated film with a live-action film in mind. However, focusing solely on realism rendered the film chatty. I found it difficult to find a balance, and make the film without losing the sense of freedom and fun that is inherent in animation. I now feel that it's more my style to make a relatable film with care than to

create a large-scale work."

From Up on Poppy Hill takes place during preparations for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, an event that proclaimed Japan's re-emergence after the destruction of WWII and the

"I think it is best to show a situation or a character's inner feelings without the use of dialogue. I think animated films and live action share this in common. I believe that a film is richer when expressing a character's feelings in scenes without dialogue. However, it demands a lot of capability on the creators' part, so it takes courage."

— Director Goro Miyazaki

period of rebuilding that followed. Kyu Sakamoto's cross-over pop hit "*Ue o muite aruko*," known in the U.S. as "*Sukiyaki*," plays in the background. Although nostalgia for the era is almost palpable, Miyazaki wasn't born until 1967.

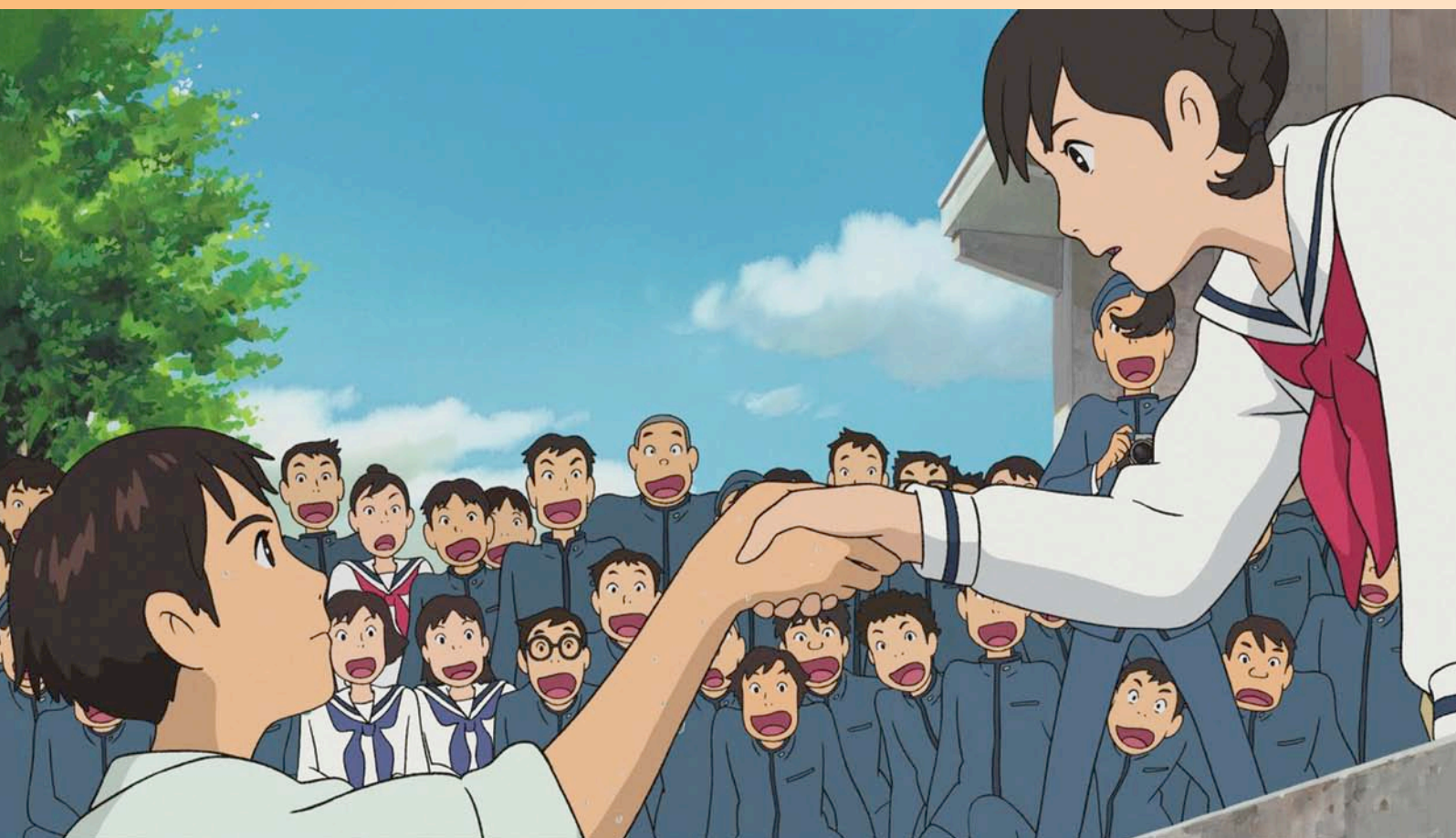
"For Japanese people, the brief period between the late 1950s and the early '60s was an interval between a war overflowing with blood, and an opulent economic era overflowing with money," he explains.

"Although there were many social problems, people felt that it was a time of relative peace and calm. Not only I, but many Japanese feel a kind of nostalgia for this period."

The script for *Poppy Hill* was adapted by Hayao Miyazaki and Kei-

ko Niwa from a graphic novel illustrated by Chizuru Takahashi and written by Tetsuro Sayama. "I did not have an opportunity to work with the creators of the graphic novel," Goro says. "Hayao Miyazaki wrote the adaptation and I made the creative decisions as director. However, I read the original work when I was young and really liked it, so I wanted to make sure that I honored it."

Unlike many recent American animated features, *From Up on Poppy Hill* doesn't talk to the audience to death. The filmmakers often rely on Satoshi Takebe's subtle jazz score and the strength of the animation to carry the story. Miyazaki praises his collaborators: "Koji Kasamatsu, the sound designer, and Satoshi Takebe, who did the music, both did a tremendous job answering my objective to express the characters' feelings not with dialogue, but with creative direction and acting. I can say the same about the work's sense of period and atmosphere."



Finding His Niche: Goro, son of the famous studio founder Hayao Miyazaki, took a wide departure from his first movie *Earthsea* with this film. The budding director says he now feels more comfortable telling a realistic story.

Without those two, the film would give a very different impression.”

“I think it is best to show a situation or a character’s inner feelings without the use of dialogue,” Miyazaki continues. “I think animated films and live action share this in common. I believe that a film is richer when expressing a character’s feelings in scenes without dialogue. However, it demands a lot of capability on the creators’ part, so it takes courage.”

Another challenge—which Miyazaki clearly enjoyed—was creating the Latin Quarter, with its decades of dust and clutter. Drawing a believable mess is much more difficult than it sounds. In the U.S., Jim Borgman of the comic strip *Zits* is a master at depicting the mounds of debris a high school kid generates. But the Latin Quarter overflows with the accumulated detritus of decades of high school students.

“We worked with several art directors for this film: This was partly because we wanted to provide our younger talent the opportunity to work, but also because we had strict time constraints,” Miyazaki

says. “I think we were able to portray the mountain of clutter in the Latin Quarter only because we enjoyed drawing it. In each stage of the process—from the storyboards, to the layouts, to the background art—the ideas of various staff members built onto the clutter, so to speak. That’s how the setting was created.”

At a time when American animation is dominated by CG, *Poppy Hill* reminds the viewer of the singular charms of hand-drawn animation. “I’ve been watching hand-drawn animation since I was a child, so I have more of a fondness for it than CG. I believe that hand-drawn animation is better-suited for showing richness in expression,” Miyazaki explains. “However, it is unfortunately true that artists who create hand-drawn animation are aging and decreasing in number. If we want to continue creating animated films, whether we like it or not, we will probably have to work with CG. As CG animation is still developing, it offers possibilities and challenges we will have a chance to confront.”

Goro Miyazaki is already at work

on his next project. When the inevitable questions about the experience of working with his celebrated father arise, he concludes, “Whether in a tangible or intangible way, I learned many things and I feel that it was a very meaningful experience. In particular, his words: ‘Animation is not about portraying reality. It is about showing one’s intention,’ have left a mark on my heart. Those words opened up my view of animation.”

.....
GKIDS will release *From Up on Poppy Hill* in March of 2013. The feature also received an Oscar-qualifying run in Los Angeles in November.

.....
Charles Solomon is an animation historian and teacher whose most recent books are *The Art and Making of Peanuts Animation: Celebrating Fifty Years of Television Specials* (Chronicle Books) and *The Toy Story Films: An Animated Journey* (Chronicle Books). He first interviewed Goro Miyazaki in 2006.



Goro Miyazaki

GKIDS Spreads the Wealth in 2013

Thanks to the hard work of Eric Beckman and his smart team at GKIDS (which stands for Guerrilla Kids International Distribution Syndicate!) audiences around the U.S. will be able to enjoy the best of global animation cinema all year round. Here is a quick look at what this innovative distributor's tentative release schedule looks like in the next few months.



The Rabbi's Cat. Based on Joann Sfar's acclaimed graphic novel, this beautiful comedic fable centers on a cat living in 1920s Algeria, who gains the ability to speak Hebrew after swallowing a parrot and expresses his desire to convert to Judaism to his owner the Rabbi. Directed by Sfar and Antoine Delesvaux, the pic won the Annecy prize for Best Animated Feature this year. (Opens on December 7 in New York City and January 18, 2013 in Los Angeles and around the country.)

From Up on Poppy Hill. See article. (Opens on March 15).

The Painting. (*Le Tableau*) Directed by veteran French helmer Jean-François Laguionie, this allegorical work is set in the world of a 1930s artist's atelier, where three races of painting beings—the completed Alldunns, the partially done Halfies and the roughly rendered Sketchies—battle each other for supremacy. Ramo, an Alldunn, and Claire, the Halfie he loves, join up with inquisitive Lola on a quest to find the artist who created them and find out his reasons for causing their differences. Co-written by Anik Le Ray (*Eleanor's Secret*), the pic mixes CG animation, 2D and even a bit of live-action! (Opens in April 2013)



Zarafa. Based on the story of the arrival of the first giraffe from Sudan to Paris, this charming family feature marries the best of 2D animation and classical storytelling. Plot surrounds 10-year-old Maki who purses his beloved pet giraffe, through Alexandria, Marseille and the snowy Alps on an exciting journey full of adventures and odd characters. Directed by Remi Bezancon, Jean-Christophe Lie. (Opens in May 2013)



There, she encounters mysterious events and eventually encounters strange creatures unlike anything she has known before. (Summer of 2013)

A Letter to Momo. Hiroyuki Okiura's inventive feature centers on a shy and imaginative 11-year-old girl who moves to a small island with her mom after her dad passes



Wrinkles. (*Arrugas*) A dignified senior citizen faces the early signs of Alzheimer's and forms new friendships at a retirement home in this poignant and humorous Spanish feature.



Directed by Ignacio Ferreras and adapted from an acclaimed graphic novel by Paco Roca. (Summer of 2013)

both become outcasts in their own communities in this charming 2D adaptation of the book series by Daniel Pennac. Directed by Stephane Aubier, Vincent Patar and Benjamin Renner. (Fall of 2013)

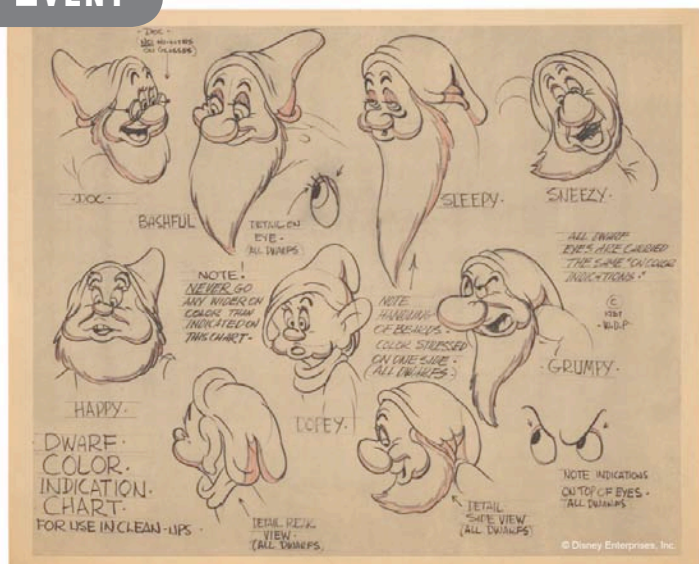
Ernest & Celestine. A non-conformist mouse who wants to be an artist forms a strong friendship with a musician bear, although they



Grave of the Fireflies (Isao Takahata) and **My Neighbor Totoro** (Hayao Miyazaki).

GKIDS will offer a special theatrical release of these two landmark anime titles, both of which will celebrate their 25th anniversary in 2013. Also be on the lookout for the traveling Studio Ghibli retrospective series.

For more info, visit www.gkids.tv



Whistle While You [Art]Work

The inaugural show at The Walt Disney Family Museum's new special exhibit space celebrates the artistry of *Snow White*.

This past November, The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco broke in its new special exhibition space—and celebrated the 75th anniversary of Disney's first animated feature effort—with the opening of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic*. Guest curated by Lella Smith, creative director of the Walt Disney Animation Research Library, the exhibit features over 200 pieces of development and production art from *Snow White* and gives testament to the incredible vision of Uncle Walt and the dedication of his artists all those years ago.

For Smith, this illustrated journey through animation history began two years ago when the WDFM contacted her about curating the inaugural exhibit. Smith and her Museum collaborators, including Walt's daughter Diane Disney Miller, decided to focus on the contrasts between the original Brothers Grimm fairytale and Disney's toon retelling—like Walt's decision to name the Dwarfs and give them unique personalities, or to use animals as a way to move the plot along—explain why these changes were made, showcase the artistry of the animators who worked four long years on the film and help visitors un-

derstand the planning and commitment that went into the film through carefully selected art pieces.

With the help of the Animation Research Library's hard-working staff of 25, the months of research went smoothly. "We were trying to represent every element of the animation process, from concept art to story sketches, animation drawings, layouts and backgrounds and cel setups," says Smith. "When we made our first pass, there were nearly 400 pieces selected and we only had room for 200, so the most difficult task was deciding what would remain."

Among the invaluable gems Smith and her archivists dug up, the curator's top pick is a story sketch of the Evil Queen reading sinister recipes out of her potion book. The team also discovered several drawings of peacock feathers surrounding the Queen's

Witch with the Poisoned Apple; Disney Studio Artist; Cel; ink and acrylic on cellulose acetate; Walt Disney Family Foundation; © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Color Model Sheet of Dwarfs; Disney Studio Artist; Model sheet; graphite copy on paper; Walt Disney Animation Research Library; © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

throne, and learned that at one point she was supposed to have a peacock sidekick. One of the exhibits most impactful pieces was not from the Library, however: "There is a magnificent cel setup of the Queen consulting the mirror that was loaned by avid *Snow White* collector Steve Ison," Smith explains. "The mirror is surrounded by the astrological signs and the Queen is decked out in an exquisite robe and crown. Not only is the condition perfect, but the regal appearance of the scene is stunning."

While very few of the incredible talents who created the film in the 1930s are with us today, Smith shares that she was able to meet the legendary Marc Davis a few years before his death and hear his thoughts on the film. "He told me how the artists were faced with new challenges in drawing the *Snow White* characters," she recalls. "There was a new realism necessary that had not applied to Mickey, Donald or Pluto ... 'If Pluto fell off a cliff, he would get up and shake himself off and walk away, but if *Snow White* fell off a cliff, she would break her arm.' The film could not be a succession of gags. It had to be filled with characters that the audience cared about, so this new reality required the artists to study how to draw convincing human figures infused with emotion."



J.B. Kaufman, the author and film historian responsible for the concurrently published book *The Fairest One of All: The Making of Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Weldon Owen, \$75), shares that he was able to interview Marjorie Belcher (Marge Champion)—who as a teenager was the live-action artists' model for Snow White—about her memories of the film. While he regrets that none of the key artists behind the film are alive today, "30 years ago it was a different story, and at that time I was fortunate enough to interview a number of the major talents behind *Snow White*: animators Grim Natwick, Ward Kimball and Art Babbitt, layout artist Ken O'Connor, background painter Maurice Noble... Their memories were invaluable in writing *The Fairest One of All* and the exhibition catalog," says Kaufman.

After spending years immersed in these precious materials, Smith and Kaufman have a new understanding of what has kept *Snow White* so popular for three quarters of a century. As Smith details, the film got off to a cracking start with over 20 million people seeing it in its first months in theaters and travelling to 46 countries by the following year; and in 2008, the American Film Institute named it the number one animated film of all time. "The film's success is due to its winning formula: Combine artful animation with a great story and add carefully thought-out characters," Smith summarizes.

"I think it's just the sheer artistry of the film, coupled with the care and attention to detail that Walt Disney and his artists lavished on it," Kaufman adds. "By all accounts, Walt was a tremendous inspiration to the staff artists, and his enthusiasm was contagious. The passion that they poured into their work became embodied in the film, and I don't think you can watch it without feeling that excitement. It really is a work of genius, perfectly realized in a polished gem of a film, and these are qualities that can't be mass-produced."

.....
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic opened Nov. 15 and runs through April 14, 2013. Visit www.waltdisney.com for tickets and special event info.

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PRODUCED BY STEPHAN ROELANTS CO-PRODUCED BY RAUL GARCIA SERGE HUME AND DIDIER BRUNNER THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY EDGAR ALLAN POE ANIMATION DIRECTOR REMY DALMAS ART DIRECTOR DENIS FIGUEIREDO STORY BOARDING ANTONIO J SANTAMARIA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CEDRIC GERVAIS SOUND EFFECTS SUPERVISOR BENFOR MUSIC BY SERGIO DE LA PUENTE WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY RAUL GARCIA



EVENT



The Relaunch of a Classic Event!

Highlights from last month's
World Animation Feature Films & VFX Summit in L.A.

Last month, the inaugural World Animation Feature Films and VFX Summit was launched in grand style at the Marina del Rey California Yacht Club. During a memorable opening night cocktail party, sponsored by Disney Studios, Animation Magazine president and event organizer **Jean Thoren** awarded **Joan Vogelesang**, president and CEO of Toon Boon Animation, a special Humanitarian prize for her tireless efforts to develop new markets in animation all over the world. New York-based indie company GKIDS was also awarded the Animation Magazine 2012 Distributor of the Year award for continuing to bring top-notch international art-house movies to U.S. audiences. Accepting the honor for studio founder and president **Eric Beckman** was publicist and animator **Jamie Bolio**.

Among the event's many highlights were insightful keynote speeches by Digital Domain co-founder **Scott Ross** about surviving the challenges of the VFX business, a special behind-the-scenes look at the making of DreamWorks Animation's *Rise of the Guardians* (with director **Peter Ramsey** and producers **Christina Steinberg** and **Nancy Bernstein**), an informative look at the development, production and distribution of Sony Pictures Animation's *Hotel Transylvania* (with director **Genndy Tartakovsky**, producer **Michelle Murdocca**, Sony's president of production **Michelle Raymo Kouyate** and president of worldwide distribution **Rory Bruer**) and a fascinating take on the effects and lighting of Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* (with **Cesar Velazquez**, **Scott Kersavage**, **Adolph Lusinsky** and **Brian Leach**).

Animation veterans **Raul Garcia**, **Frank Gladstone**, **Jeffrey Scott** and **Dan Wicksman** discussed the challenges and rewards of writing for international audiences, and Oscar-winning producer **Max Howard** delivered an eye-opening presentation about how to get your film qualified for an Academy Award. A timely look at the vfx survival strategies for indie houses featured **Kevin Baillie** (co-founder and vfx supervisor at Studio Atomic Fiction), **Mike Romney** (pipeline supervisor at Zoic Studios), **Danielle Plantec** (co-founder of Scanline VFX) and **Jeff Young** (president and COO of Arc Productions). Anima Vitae CEO and Partner **Petteri Pasanen** and Tripod Entertainment's exec director **Joseph Pearson** also led an interesting discussion about producing global animated projects. The list of high-powered toon and vfx experts at the event included Prana Studios' president **Christian Kubtsch**, entertainment attorney **Fred Fierst**, The Foundry's senior product designer **Matt Plec**, ZYNC VP **Todd Prives**, Rollman Entertainment's **Eric Rollman**, Natural Talent's **Donna Felten**, The Gotham Group's **Eric Robinson**, Quattro Media's **Jim Strader**, Van Duren Agency's **Annette van Duren** and YEKRA's co-founders **Miles Romney** and **Lee Waterworth**, who wrapped up the event with a peek at the possibilities of future distribution methods.

"The Summit proved to be a wonderful way for animation and visual effects professionals from all around the world to meet, share their knowledge and spend time with their colleagues," said Thoren. "We had an amazing response from our guests, so we're planning an even bigger and more diverse program for 2013. We hope everyone puts the Animation Summit on their must-attend list for November of next year."

For more info, visit www.animationmagazine.net/summit



counter-clockwise from top left:

- 1 - Harry Kim, Jean Thoren, and Troy Zafer, Zac Toons director (Australia).
- 2 - Sony's dynamic *Hotel Transylvania* panelists director Genndy Tartakovsky, producer Michelle Murdocca, president of production Michelle Raymo Kouyate and Sony's president of worldwide distribution Rory Bruer.
- 3 - DreamWorks Animation's *Rise of the Guardians* panel featured director Peter Ramsey, and producers Christina Steinberg and Nancy Bernstein.
- 4 - VFX Survival for Indies panelists featured Jeff Young, president and COO of Arc Productions; Danielle Plantec, co-founder of Scanline VFX; Kevin Baillie, co-founder & vfx supervisor at Atomic Fiction and Mike Romey, supervisor at Zoic Studios (not pictured).
- 5 - Animation writing pros Raul Garcia, Frank Gladstone, Jeffrey Scott and Dan Wicksman share their knowledge on the Toons Beyond Borders panel.
- 6 - Event keynote speaker, visual effects veteran Scott Ross, one of the founders of Digital Domain.
- 7 - Disney's *Wreck-It Ralph* panel featured effects supervisor Cesar Velazquez, vfx supervisor Scott Kersavage, director of look and lighting Adolph Lusinsky and associate director of look and lighting Brian Leach.
- 8 - The attendees are taken on an informative tour of Nickelodeon Studios in Burbank.
- 9 - No animation event is complete without a tour of Sony's historic campus.
- 10 - FotoKem VP of sales and marketing Allan Tudzin demonstrates the company's 3D post pipeline services.
- 11 - Animation Feature Summit staff:
We look forward to welcoming you in 2013!
- 12 - Toon Boom Animation CEO Joan Vogelsang receives The 2012 Animation Humanitarian of the Year Award from *Animation Magazine* publisher Jean Thoren.
- 13 - Mie Onishi and Ai Inoue from Marza Animation Planet in Japan.
- 14 - Gotham Group's Julie Kane-Ritsch and Peter McHugh at the opening night party.



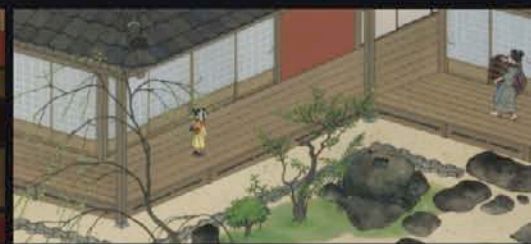


COMBUSTIBLE

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-Charles Solomon, Los Angeles Times



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A New House of Horror

Spanish helmer Raul Garcia pays homage to Edgar Allan Poe in the CG-animated short, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. by Ramin Zahed

When animation veteran Raul Garcia was a young boy growing up in Madrid, he recalls being influenced by two key cultural experiences: One was watching animated clips on *The Wonderful World of Disney* on TV and the other was reading Edgar Allan Poe's tales of horror and suspense. Both of these activities have informed his animation career—one that brought him from Spain to America to work on movies such as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Aladdin*, *Tarzan*, *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Lion King* to more recent projects such as directing the Spanish feature *The Missing Lynx* and the acclaimed short *The Tell-Tale Heart* (2005) and producing *The Lady and the Reaper* (2009).

This month, Garcia's passion for Poe is once again on full display as his animated short based on *The Fall of the House of Usher* has been short-listed for an Oscar nomination. Narrated by another Poe aficionado, actor Christopher Lee, the 17-minute project was produced by Melusine Productions, R&R Communications Inc., Les Armateurs and The Big Farm. As the director tells us recently, this latest labor of love is actually part of a larger project that would encompass more shorts based on Poe's classic stories.

"I started working on *The House of Usher* about four years ago, after we finished the movie *The Missing Lynx*," he recalls. "The financial crisis made it very challenging for us to raise the money. I'd originally planned to develop a feature based on different stories by Poe, but we had to be more flexible. There was a time when we even tried to go ahead with a TV series of 13 episodes, but the economy was fragile, and we were fortunate to have this short done."

Garcia says his goal was to create a short that was completely different from the other projects he'd worked on. While his 2005 short *The Tell-Tale Heart* was also inspired by a famous Poe short story, *The Fall of the House of Usher* has a different CG look. "I wanted to match the theme with a graphic style that would help the story," he notes. "We were fortunate to have Christopher Lee as our narrator as he is someone who has played such a huge role in the history of horror movies."

The bulk of the film's animation was done in Luxembourg (using 3ds Max and special plug-ins) since the short was financed by the Luxem-



Raul Garcia

bourg Film Fund, and produced by Stéphane Roelants, who runs Melusine Productions and also collaborated with Garcia on *Tell-Tale Heart*. Among Roelants' many animation credits are *A Town Called Panic*, *The Day of the Crows* and *Ernest and Celestine*.

A lifelong fan of Poe stories and a true horror movie aficionado, Garcia strove to depict the decay of the titular house in an original and authentic way. "I was pretty amazed at the graphic style that we came up with," he admits. "The art direction and design of the project really

evolved as the story progresses. It was one of those cases where we knew what was possible and what we weren't able to do with our budget. I can tell you that the one image that really hovers over the entire production is Edvard Munch's fa-

mous painting, *The Scream*. That was a key inspiration for us." Now that *House of Usher* is finished and ready to tour the festival circuit, Garcia is beginning to plan ahead. "I would love to do three more, perhaps, but I want to adapt the stories that I really, really love," he says. "These more mature subjects liberate me from drawing little fuzzy bunnies for a while." He is also developing a family movie called *Bitten*, based on a novel by Cornelia Funke, the best-selling German author of books such as *Inkheart* and *Reckless*. "It's a mix of comedy and horror and is about a boy who is bitten by a strange creature and becomes a werewolf."

Comparing the animation scene today with the toon climate of three decades ago, Garcia says there are a lot more choices in 2012. "We were very lucky back then if Disney did one movie each year," he notes. "Technology-wise, I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing now. My main complaint is that everyone is doing the same kind of photorealistic look in CG. It's as if all the painters are



given the same box of oil paints and told that's all they can do. Which brings me back to the short. That's why we wanted to promote different looks and styles besides photorealism in *The Fall of the House of Usher*."

■



In the Beginning...

Minkyu Lee discusses his Annie-winning, Oscar short-listed, Genesis themed short *Adam and Dog*, by Mercedes Milligan

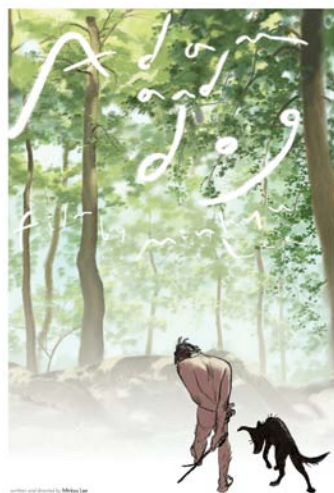
Companionship between humans and animals is an oft-explored concept in the film world, no less in the animation realm. But one of this year's Best Animated Short Oscar short-list contenders seeks to breathe new life into an old trope: Minkyu Lee's digital 2D fable *Adam and Dog*, set in the Garden of Eden and exploring the genesis of an age old communion. "I didn't want Eden or this dog's relationship to Adam to be portrayed in a way that felt contrived or too plot-driven," says the director. "I really wanted to focus on conveying the sense of peace in Eden, and also that sense of breath, and the purity of life there. I think breathing room is such an important thing for a character to feel truly alive. Just letting the characters be who they are."

Lee, who was fascinated by animation from a young age, lists his idols as toon legends Glen Keane and Yuri Norstein, and his favorite example of the art form is Disney's *Pinocchio*. But for this project, the film buff also

drew on the works of directors Andrei Tarkovsky, Terrence Malick, Sofia Coppola and Jean-Luc Godard. "I'd sometimes choose the shots in a more conventional way, and immediately something would feel off or lost. And then I'd watch a Godard film and think, 'Wow, what a great feeling of liberation! I can do anything I want with film!' And it would always help me think outside of the typical restrictions of familiar storytelling," he recalls.

The 27-year-old, Korean-born artist, who also produced the short, says the idea came from a writing exercise he did while enrolled in CalArts' M.F.A. film directing program. Toward the end of 2009, he began working on bringing his concept to life, devoting his off hours and weekends to the project for about two years before taking leave from work to devote six months to its completion. A small but loyal army of talented animator and artist friends also spent their nights and weekends volunteering their services, animating from their home set-

ups primarily in TV Paint; some work was also done on paper. Since the crew was gratis, Lee's main costs were for equipment, software, printing and other miscellaneous ele-



ments; he estimates these cost between 10 and 20 thousand dollars.

A Keane Interest

One of the highlights of the production for Lee was the involvement of legendary Disney animator Glen Keane, who served as a guide and mentor for the crew. Lee recalls that the revered artist was very interested in the project from early in the process, and the two began meeting to discuss the film frequently after that. In addition to reviewing the animators' work, Keane was an invaluable guide for Lee in developing the story. "Glen has this wonderful gift to see deeper into a piece of art, or a moment, or a story. He can see through it, and discover the core of it," the director explains. "When I first pitched him the story, he said to me that it really felt like a story of 'grace'—a grace that was given as a gift to mankind. And when I heard that I just went, 'That's it! I know that that is what my film is about.'"

While Keane's impressive resume

(Disney's *Tarzan*, *Pocahontas*, *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Little Mermaid* among others) came in handy, Lee was blown away by how dedicated to the project Keane proved himself to be.

"Once, we had decided that he would animate this scene in which Eve meets these fawns. And we kind of talked about what that scene could mean for the film, and how the action would play out," Lee remembers. "The next day, he came into work with this huge stack of drawings! And the drawings were him searching for the design of the fawns, of Eve holding them, how they would walk, how she would interact with them...He told me that that night after being handed the scene, he had dreamed of these fawns, and he woke up in the middle of the night, and couldn't go back to sleep because he was so inspired by it, and just went straight to the drawing board."

Another morale-boosting moment came after the film's completion, when *Adam and Dog* took home the 2012 Annie Award for Best Animated Short last February—beating out major studio heavyweights for the honor. Lee's excitement about the recognition is still plain almost a year later, and he notes he was especially pleased to be able to share the night with his friends/crew members who got to see their hard work pay off. For Lee in particular, the Annie win has opened doors to getting more of his stories out of his head and onto screens by putting his name in front of TV and film agents.

In fact, Lee shares that he already has a variety of concepts in various stages of development for TV, film, books and graphic novels which he is working on, in addition to spending his days as a visual development artist for Disney's feature animation department and teaching 2D Character Animation at his alma mater, CalArts. Who knows—after experiencing the restful beauty of his animated Eden, you might almost have the energy to keep up with this rapidly rising star.

For more information about *Adam and Dog*, visit adamanddog.tumblr.com.



Director Minkyu Lee (with poster) pauses for a quick photo op at a screening of *Adam and Dog* with his dedicated crew—including Disney legend Glen Keane (second from right).

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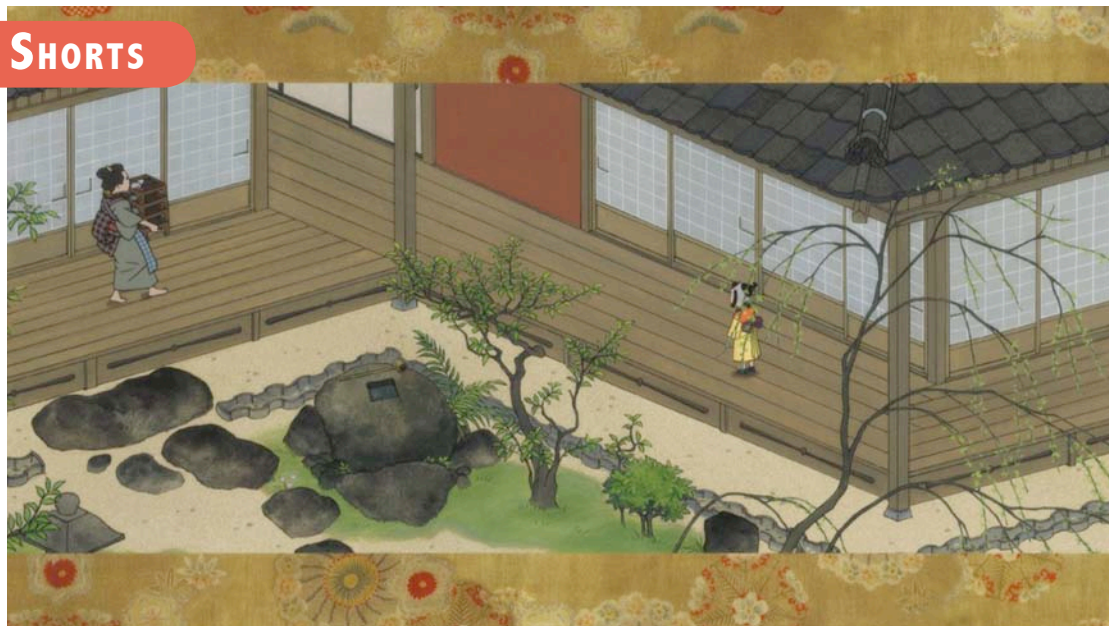
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A Perfect Period Piece

Ôtomo's beautiful new short *Combustible* condenses a lifetime of events in a 12-minute format.

During a recent interview, Katsuhiro Ôtomo said that he wished he had a time machine so that he could travel to different periods in history. With his new 12-minute, animated short *Combustible*, the widely revered director of films such as *Akira* (1988) and *Steamboy* (2004), allows his audience to travel back 300 years to the Edo era (1603-1868) of Japan.

"I've always wanted to create a story about Edo," he tells Animag. "The theme of this work is based around classic tales from the Edo era such as *Yaoya Oshichi* and the comic *Kaji Musuko*, which are commonly used for Kabuki or Joruri programs. I wanted to take that old theme that we used to have in Japan 300 years ago, and describe with recent technologies, in anime form."

The beautifully crafted shorts visits different stages in the lives of two characters who grew up as childhood friends, fall for each other as teens, become separated as adults, and are reunited under difficult circumstances. *Combustible* is one of ten shorts that have made the Oscar shortlist this year, and was recently screened at the Platform Animation Festival in Los Angeles,

where Ôtomo received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ôtomo says he developed the project as a short because it was difficult to get a greenlight for a feature film set in the Edo period. "In Japan, it's becoming increasingly difficult to develop a project based on an original screenplay," he says. "Of



course, I don't believe this is only limited to just Japan."

It took his team of 11 about a year to develop the short—six devoted their time to drawing while the other five were tasked with the other visual aspects. The animation—which is a mix of CG and hand-drawn—was completed at studio located in the Ogikubo neigh-

borhood of Tokyo. "We relied on CG in order to complete the project within the development period," says Ôtomo. "The mob scenes, special effects and some of the other more detailed tasks would take a long time to animate had we chosen to do all of it with hand-drawn animation."

Authentic Details

Looking back at the short, Ôtomo says he is quite pleased with how they were able to recreate the atmosphere of the Edo period through the clothing, hairstyles, ar-

chitecture and other details. He adds, however, that the most challenging aspect of the job was handling the CG animation. He explains, "We didn't have any experience CG animators on our staff, so we had to do a lot of retakes to complete the job."

Although he says he sometimes finds inspiration in real-life events



Katsuhiro Ôtomo

and political situations, the 58-year-old artist admits that he prefers working on fantasies. "Not everything in current events makes for a good story—for example, we had a big earthquake two years ago in Japan," he told Anime News Network recently. "I was very shocked, but despite everything that happened, I'm not convinced anyone will be able to make a good work of fiction out of it. Some artists have already started drawing, but they've stuck mostly to accounts of what actually happened in Japan."

When asked about the lasting impact of *Akira*, his cyberpunk classic on the next generation of filmmakers, Ôtomo says he's happy that audiences continue to appreciate his early work. "As for the live-action version of the film, I'm not involved with it at all. I drew the original manga, directed the anime, and I believe I did everything I could do for it. However, it's important to move on."

A fan of classic movies such as Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause*, believes it's become harder and harder to direct features in Japan. "Maybe some of the difficulties in the business world are the result of the earthquake, and everything else that is happening over there," he says. "But it's not easy to get sponsors from the corporate world to produce animation today."

So how does he think aspiring filmmakers and animators should prepare for their careers? "Watch lots of the masterpieces that have been made in the past," says Ôtomo wisely. ■



 DREAMWORKS

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10 Things We Loved About 2012!

The silly, big-hearted cast of Aardman's *The Pirates! Band of Misfits*.

How Korra, the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and a stop-motion *SpongeBob* came to Nickelodeon's rescue.

A Brave Pixar princess who doesn't give a damn about princes.

DreamWorks' double treat—a rollicking summer *Madagascar* adventure and a magical *Rise of the Guardians* holiday gem.

Cartoon Network continued to make us laugh with *Adventure Time*, *Regular Show* and *Annoying Orange*.

Genndy Tartakovsky's vampire hit *Hotel Transylvania* erased the memories of the lame *Twilight* series.

The zombies of *ParaNorman* and the re-animated pets of *Frankenweenie* put screams back into stop-motion.

Wreck-It Ralph's perfect mix of clever humor, 8-bit nostalgia and genuine emotion.

The brilliant lunacy of Disney Channel's *Gravity Falls*.

Live-action movies like *Life of Pi*, *The Avengers* and *The Hobbit* that put some animated pics to shame.



Korra



Brave



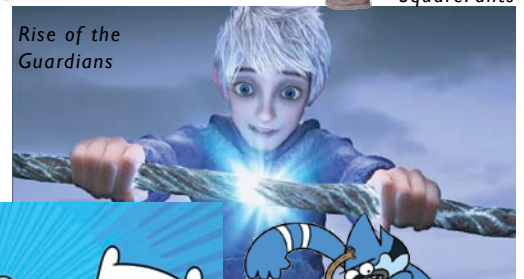
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



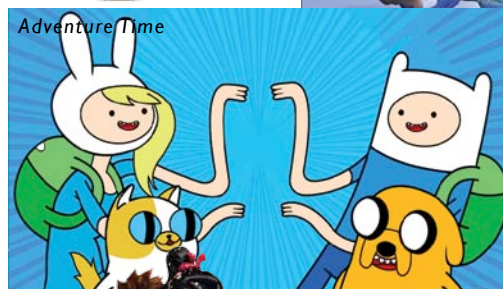
Madagascar



SpongeBob SquarePants



Annoying Orange



Regular Show



Hotel Transylvania



Frankenweenie



ParaNorman



The Hobbit



Wreck-It Ralph



Gravity Falls



Patrick Doyle

The Winning Scores

The composers of some of the best animated soundtracks of the year discuss their craft and inspirations. by Ramin Zahed

Over the past year, there have been plenty of behind-the-scenes features about the visual aspects of recent animated features in theaters. While many of these movies have been absolutely stunning to look at, it's important to remember the talented men and women who worked hard to create the aural backdrops to these visual feasts.

French composer Alexandre Desplat is one of the most prolific musical talents working in the film business today. This year alone, audiences were able to enjoy his soundtracks for movies as wide-ranging as *Moonrise Kingdom*, *Rust and Bone*, *Argo*, *Zero Dark Thirty* and DreamWorks Animation's holiday treat *Rise of the Guardians*.

Desplat describes *Guardians* as "a very beautiful, visual work." He says he totally immersed himself in the magical world of the film's legendary characters Santa Claus, the Sand Man, Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy and Jack Frost. "It's a very emotional film, and you need to feel the psychological states of the characters. I worked closely with the film's director Peter Ramsey and producer Christina Steinberg. They have great respect for their collabora-

tors and try to immerse you in the beautiful visuals of the film. You feel like you're an actor working with a great theatrical director."

Desplat says he was contacted by the DreamWorks team about two years ago and he was presented with the film's key designs and shown some of the finished sequences. "I thought a lot about the film and I began to dream about it," he recalls. "I keep my brain clear and eventually the music begins to form in your head. When you score an animated feature like this, it car-

ries the film for 90 minutes non-stop. You have to make sure that you're not repeating yourself and boring the audience with the same sound and melody; you have to find the arc and a new plateau, then go up again and deliver a powerful climax in the end."

Desplat, who was trained as a classical flute player, says he became a cinephile at an early age and began admiring the film scores of John Williams (*Star Wars*), Maurice Jarre (David Lean's movies) and Nino Rota (Fellini's classics). The *Guard-*

ians soundtrack is another high note in a career that has included Oscar-nominated work for *The Queen*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and *The King's Speech*. In addition to Wes Anderson's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, his other animated effort is the 1999 feature *A Monkey's Tale*, which was directed by Jean-François Laguionie (*Le Tableau*). He says he enjoys working on animated projects because of the freedom they provide him to explore different characters, situations and themes.

Sounds of the Ancient Highlands

Patrick Doyle, the much-heralded composer who delivered the evocative and emotional soundtrack to Disney-Pixar's *Brave* this year, says writing the music for a story set in his homeland was a true gift. "I've always been an enormous fan of animation," he says. "I was first approached about composing the score for *Brave* over three years ago, and spent time coming back and forth to San Francisco, watching the various stages of the film as it grew. I watched many storyboard versions in the theater in Pixar, as well as visiting various animators to watch their work as it progressed. It also gave me time to think, which is the greatest gift for a

continued on page 28



Alexandre Desplat

composer. Live-action film scores, which I do mostly, tend to give you much less preparation time, so this gestation period in animation is a luxury which I adore.”

He says that the film’s narrative, the geographic setting, the great performances and the beautiful animation were all important ingredients that fired his imagination. “A lot of the preparation for this score was already in place because I was brought up surrounded by Celtic folk music, and in my immediate household my father, mother and other relatives were and are singers,” he adds.

Overall, Doyle, who was nominated for Oscars for his work on *Hamlet* (1996) and *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), says the job of musically charting Princess Merida’s thrilling adventure was a uniquely thrilling one. “The job of writing the score for *Brave* was a joyful experience, and it became exponentially fun as time went on,” he remarks. “The people are incredibly generous and I was looked after extremely well by [director] Mark Andrews, [producer] Katherine Sarafian, [director] Brenda Chapman and the team. John Lasseter has created an extraordinary company and it was a pleasure and an honor to be included in yet another exceptional and original creation.”

Play It Again, Ralph

Imagining the musical soundtrack to the chaotic and very different videogame worlds of Disney’s *Wreck-It Ralph* created a whole set of new challenges and rewards for composer Henry Jackman.

“Probably, the toughest part of the job was finding a way to give each of the different videogame worlds their own musical fingerprint, but still keep the narrative tied together,” he tells us. “But that was actually half the fun of doing the score, getting to weave these different textures and styles together into a score. It was a challenge, but a fun one.”

Jackman points out that seeing all the different elements come together was also part of the rewards of the job. “And it wasn’t just the score coming together; Skrillex and Owl City made tracks for the film as well. We didn’t work together on those, but they are such pros at what they do, and they have their own unique sounds, it was cool to see how they interpreted the movie.”

To prepare for his assignment, Jackman says he hung out with the film’s director Rich Moore, looked at all the storyboards and listened to the story carefully.

“Rich wandered around the room telling me all of his ideas, so I had a really good feel for all the different worlds they had created,” he recalls. “They had Sugar Rush, Hero’s Duty, and the Wreck-It Ralph world. As he walked around and told the story it was really obvious that the movie was a complete winner. That was before any animated footage at all. In fact, we had quite an in-depth musical conversation at that point, when we decided that even with all of these different worlds we could get excited about, we needed themes that could glue everything together.”

2012 Composer Credits

Dr. Seuss’ The Lorax (John Powell)
The Pirates! Band of Misfits (Theodore Shapiro)
Madagascar 3: Europe’s Most Wanted (Hans Zimmer)
Brave (Patrick Doyle)
Ice Age: Continental Drift (John Powell)
ParaNorman (Jon Brion)
Hotel Transylvania (Mark Mothersbaugh)
Frankenweenie (Danny Elfman)
Wreck-It Ralph (Henry Jackman)
A Liar’s Autobiography (John Greswell, Chris Murphy Taylor)
Rise of the Guardians (Alexandre Desplat)
The Painting (Pascal Le Pennec)
From Up on Poppy Hill (Satoshi Takebe)
Zarafa (Laurent Perez Del Mar)
The Rabbi’s Cat (Olivier Daviaud)
The Secret of The Wings (Joel McNeely)



Having had a lot of fond memories of the early videogame universe, Jackman enjoyed immersing himself in those old-school notes. As he tells us, “I was excited to get into the classic videogame music sound. Back in the day, actually, my first ever paid gig was to convert a game called *M.C. Kids*, which was an arcade game for the Commodore 64—I had to type in like 10 lines of machine code for it to make a lot of beeps and boops.”

Jackman, whose previous animation credits include *Kung Fu Panda*, *Monsters vs. Aliens*, *Winnie the Pooh* and *Puss in Boots*, says he did lots of research to come up with just the right notes for the movie. “I even bought a big old *Donkey Kong* game console!” he says. “I studied those old Namco chips to learn about their frequency response and how many simultaneous noises those things could make. Even when you

get to the mid ‘90s, they could only make like four simultaneous sounds. Same with the Atari. I wanted the 8-bit music to be as authentic as possible.”

Since our hero Ralph travels to different game worlds in the movie, Jackman had to come up with different sonic cultures for each milieu. “The beginning of the movie is really strictly 8-bit, as you don’t even see Ralph as a 3D character, but then it opens up,” he explains. “Hero’s Duty has this intense action feel to it. Sugar Rush has a J-Pop vibe in there, and then Vanellope has her own sound. By the time you get to reel four, there are these heavy emotional cues, because Ralph’s relationship with Vanellope has gotten more serious.”

Jackman does a great job of articulating the importance of his work on the big screen. “It’s all to do with the story, really,” he notes. “It doesn’t matter if it’s a person or a cartoon, the feelings are the same, and so you should take it just as seriously when scoring it. What is different in animation is that you need to be more flexible and able to turn on a dime. In a live-action movie you have more space, where as in an animated film you may have five or six different musical ideas in a minute long piece of music... But those ideas need to be just as real and full on as they would be in a live-action film.” ■





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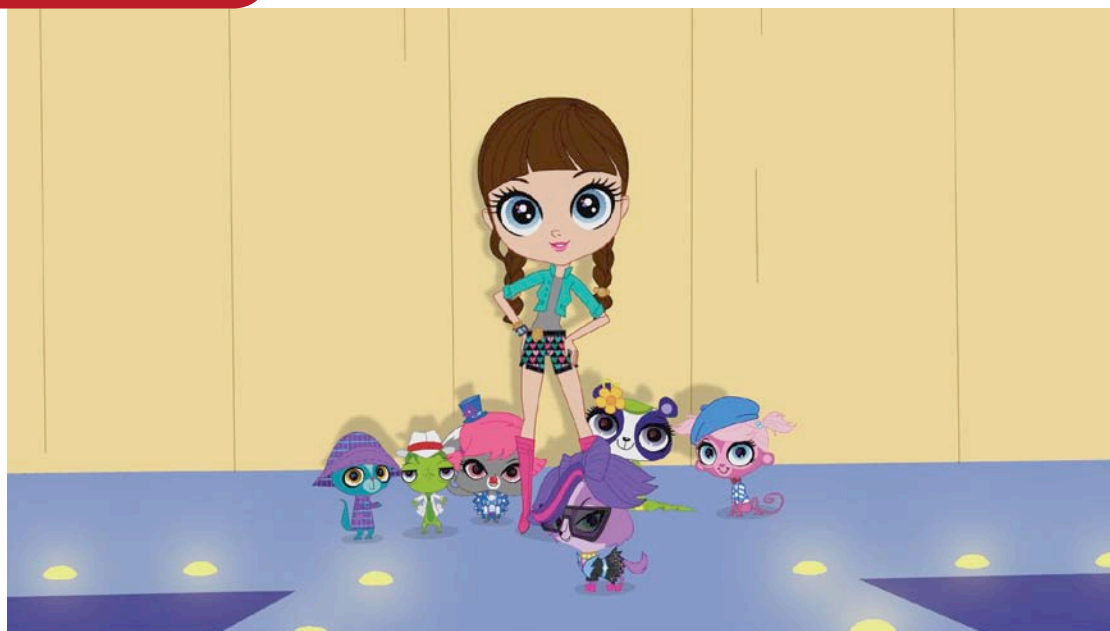
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The Next Little Big Thing?

The Hub launches its latest franchise revamp with fashion-forward *The Littlest Pet Shop*. by Mercedes Milligan

Just when you thought The Hub network's lineup of Hasbro Studios original toons couldn't get any cuter, a new animated take on the popular Littlest Pet Shop toy line is set to bring all new cuddly critters, charming human characters and catchy musical numbers into the mix.

The Littlest Pet Shop, a 2D animated 26 x half-hour series, centers on Blythe: a small town girl who has just moved with her father to a Big City apartment right above The Littlest Pet Shop, where all kinds of pets gather for day care. Incredibly, Blythe discovers she can talk to and understand the pets, opening up new worlds of imaginative adventures. The regular pet crew includes an adorable panda, dancing gecko and diva dog among others—not to mention the various pets from all over the city that drop in for day care from time to time.

Strangely, according to executive producers/story editors Julie McNally Cahill and Tim Cahill (Cartoon Network's *My Gym Partner's a Monkey*), when they joined the development process at Hasbro in September 2011 they found the pet

shop was not even part of the show yet. "They were nervous about the pet shop selling pets—we convinced them that pet shops aren't like that anymore. They're amazing places, with day camps and grooming stations...they cater to pets now instead of just selling them," Tim explains.

Also serving as exec producers on the series are Chris Bartleman and Kirsten Newman. Dallas Parker is supervising director, with Joel Dickie as director. The show's original music is handled by Daniel Ingram and Steffan Andrews. The voice cast is lead by Ashleigh Ball as Blythe; the pets are voiced by Tabitha St. Germain, Nicole Oliver, Jocelyne Loewen, Peter New, Sam Vincent, Kyle Rideout and Kira Tozer. Michael Kopsa plays Blythe's dad, Shannon Chan-Kent voices her twin tormentors Whittany and Brittany, and Kathleen Barr is Mrs. Twombly, pet shop owner.

The producers say that after Hasbro opted for their pitch for the property, the development process was a rapid-fire, on-the-fly blur which flew into production. Julie Cahill notes that while Hasbro's

re-launch of the toy line has been a big hit, they were more focused on building a quality show than tying the toon in to retail efforts. "They did have a core cast of pet characters we had to work with, but we wanted to expand the world, so we gave Blythe friends and a life outside the pet shop, and we added the proprietor of the pet shop who is kind of like a mother to Blythe," she elaborates. "We knew they wanted to do something with fashion, so we had Blythe be a designer and create pet fashion—we tried to tie everything in in an organic way and make it like this is Blythe's new life, but it's a young teenager's life as well."

Tim adds that they also created "Mean Girl" style villains for Blythe (their father owns the largest pet shop in town) as well as a cool superhero style secret entrance from her apart-

ment to the pet shop via a dumb-waiter.

In addition to designing fun fashions for the pets, Blythe also changes outfits frequently—rocking at least two looks per episode—something that directors Parker and Dickie say adds a little pressure to the speedy production schedule at DHX Media in Vancouver, Canada (which also handles the animation for Hub hit *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*). Keeping the heroine's look fresh is just a part of the show's design goals to create a graphic, modern and animation-friendly look full of poppy colors. DHX handles the design, posing and key animation for the show which has seven key animal characters and six key or recurring human characters, not to mention new people and pets who come to the shop. An outside studio provides animation service work from DHX's detailed scene instructions, and the animation is done entirely in Flash from digital boards drawn by hand in SketchBook Pro.

"Dallas [Parker] and I see every stage along the way, so we're juggling three or four episodes at once, but it seems like from the beginning script to final animation it takes about a year. Based on our rationale, we'll be finished with the series in 52 years!" Dickie jokes. When we spoke in October, DHX had completed seven episodes with the help of their hundred-odd team.

In addition to the ongoing fashion show, the animation and design teams also face the challenges of innovating funky dance routines for musical sequences, crafting thematic backgrounds and settings for imaginative adventure fantasies, and scrutinizing Flash frames for continuity. "[Mrs. Twombly] has a beauty mark on her upper



Pets and Petulance: EPs Tim and Julie Cahill strove to expand Blythe's world beyond the pet shop to create a funny, compelling show—including creating twin “Mean Girl” nemeses Whittany and Brittany.

lip like Marilyn Monroe—that seems to be the biggest animation challenge, making sure it's on the right side!” says Parker. “Flash is a good program for reusing animation, but reusing animation is pretty tough on this show with Blythe because her outfits keep changing.”

Before all the talk of big-eyed animals and wardrobe changes gets the testosterone crowd rolling their eyes (c'mon, just Google “bronies!”), it's important to note that the Cahills strove to create a show that kids of both genders will enjoy. “It sounds like a very girl-oriented show, and is, but we have boy characters and we try to bring that boy sensibility into the show so it appeals to boys as well as girls—and their parents, who might be in the room watching, and we'd love for them to enjoy the show and maybe



get some of the jokes their kids are puzzled by,” says Julie Cahill. “It's not like a preschool show ... sometimes it is a challenge to make sure it doesn't go too sweet, too young.”

“[Hasbro] has been really open to letting us do a lot of physical humor in the show,” adds Tim Cahill. “It has this really snappy animation

we were really pushing for. Julie and I are fans of quirky comedy, so we try to work in quirky humor as much as we can, and it seems to be working out well.”

Once audiences meet *Pet Shop's* crazy monkey, sagacious hedgehog, adorable panda and mongoose-gecko comedy tag team (plus the

rest of the gang), we have a feeling there won't be a boy or girl on the block ashamed to admit this fun show is waiting on their DVR.

.....
The Hub launched *The Littlest Pet Shop* last month. The series airs Saturdays at 11 a.m. ET/ 8 a.m. PT.

A SMALL SELECTION OF VFS ANIMATION & VISUAL EFFECTS ALUMNI CREDITS INCLUDE

The Amazing Lo, Senior Animator | Cobal Yu, Digital Artist | Laurie Powers, Composer | Marco Leone, Stereo Composer | Matt Animator | **Argo** Geoffrey Hancock, Visual Effects Supervisor | Jamie Bowers, Texture Artist | Jose Yapor, Visual Effects Vargas, Senior Artist | Magdalena Dadelo, Senior Character Artist **The Avengers** Aaron Gilman, Animation Supervisor Animator | Cedric Lo, Lead Animator | Scott Jones, Creature TD | Daphne de Jesus, Senior Digital Paint Artist | Nicholas Markel, Previsualization Supervisor **The Bourne Legacy** Emanuele Bignone, Generalist TD | Jose Julian Karam Lopez, Composer | Saptarshi Chakraborty, Composer | Gia Sadihwani, Visual Effects Artist | Pietro Ponti, CG Sequence Lead **Brave** Bill Watral, Effects Artist | Justine Codron, Lighting TD **Cars 2** Stephen King, Animator | Sherrie Law, Digital Painter **Cloud Atlas** Kyeong Peck, Senior Modeler/Texture Artist | Geoffrey Hancock, Visual Effects Supervisor | Jamie Bowers, Texture Artist | Jose Yapor, Visual Effects Artist | Ian Sorensen, Lead Modeler | Alberto Landeros, Digital Composer | Lisa Nolan, Visual Effects Artist **Conan the Barbarian** Giancarlo Derchie, Lead Composer | Tim Chou, Stereoscopic Conversion Composer | Giacomo Cavalletti, Environment Modeler **The Dark Knight Rises** Dean Mangion, Matchmove Artist | Frederik Lillelund, Lighting TD **Dead Rising 2** Fredrick Fassé, Animator **Dead Space 2** Wayne Gonsalves, Environment Art Lead **Deus Ex: Human Revolution** Ryan Nickell, Senior Animator **Diablo III** John Miller, Environment Artist | Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist | Steven Chen, Cinematic Artist **District 9** Neill Blomkamp, Director/Co-Writer | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Robert Bourgeault, Lighting Lead | Paul Copeland, Character TD | James Stewart, Creature Supervisor **Dragon Age II** Nathan Zufelt, Senior Cinematic Animator **Family Guy** Michael Loya, Storyboard Artist **Fast Five** Rommel Shamoun, Composer | Anthony Di Ninno, Animator **FIFA 13** Jason McNamar, Associate Modeler **Futurama** Claudia Keene, Prop Designer **Halo 4** Steve Dyck, Lead Animator | Mark Tanner, Senior Animator | Kolby Jukes, Senior Character Artist | Andrew Bosold, 3D Environment Artist **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 2** Henry South, CG Modeler | Joshua Herrig, Lead Lighting Artist Jozef van Eenbergen, Pipeline Developer | Nuno Nisa Pereira, Visual Effects TD **The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey** Adam Bradley, Senior Digital Paint Artist | Louis Cox, Camera TD | Michael Cozens, Senior Animator | Aaron Gilman, Senior Animator | Tamir Diab, Lighting TD | Cesar Rodriguez Bautista, Senior Paint Artist **Hotel Transylvania** Chad Ellis, Senior Animator | Eva Fan, Animator | Will McCrate, Digital Artist **Hugo** Geeta Basantani, Lead Composer **Ice Age: Continental Drift** Bora Cho, Pipeline TD | Graham Silva, Animator | Scott Lemmer, Animator | Thom Roberts, Animator **Life of Pi** Alex Berson, Roto/Paint Artist | Andrew Juano, Roto/Prep Artist | Diego Piccinato, Digital Composer | Jason McKeeman, Lead Creature FX TD | Kirk Chantraine, Pipeline Software Engineer | Oded Granot, Compositing TD | Richard Sur, Lighting TD | Ryan B. Clarke, Senior Composer | Teh-wei Yeh, Lighting TD **Mass Effect 3** Nathan Zufelt, Cinematic Animator | Bartek Kujbida, Cinematic Animator **Men in Black 3** Juan Carlos Mendoza, Digital Composer | John Iskandar, Lighting and Compositing TD Raphael Santos, Roto Artist | Ricardo Gomez, CG Artist **My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic** Jayson Thiessen, Supervising Director | James Wootton, Director **Prometheus** Gerard Van Ommen Kloeke, Character Rigging Supervisor | Chrystia Siolkowsky, Roto Artist | Giancarlo D'Erchie, Digital Composer | Louis Cox, Camera TD **Resident Evil: Retribution** Corey Coates, Composer | Juan Carlos Mendoza, Digital Composer | Diego Piccinato, Digital Composer | Ricardo Gomez, CG Artist | Arthur Logo, Digital Composer | Karan Awasthi, Digital Composer **Rise of the Planet of the Apes** Carolyn Wong, Creature TD | Richard Sur, Lighting TD | Chrystia Siolkowsky, Motion Editor **Sleeping Dogs** Andrew Poon, Cinematics Animator | Corey Kleim, Lead World Artist | Hani Abu-Ghazaleh, Art Director | Rob Starr, Lighting Artist | Sota Yuyama, Gameplay Animator | Terence Wong, Character Artist **Smurfs** Jeff Struthers, Character Animator | Michael Dhamney, Senior Animator **SpongeBob SquarePants** Andrew Overtoom, Animation Director **Supernatural** Christopher Richardson, Composer/Lead Artist | Sebastian Fernandez Hyde, Digital Composer | Wener ten Hoeve, Composer **Thor** Daphne de Jesus, Roto/Paint Artist | Eric Petey, Animation Supervisor | Rex Fang, Animator **Toy Story 3** Daniel Holland, Sets Artist | Tristan Ikuta, Simulation & Effects Artist **Transformers: Dark of the Moon** Serguei Kalenchouk,

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The Return of a Seasonal Friend

Channel 4 and Lupus Films revive Raymond Briggs' beloved characters in a new animated special *The Snowman and the Snowdog*. by Ramin Zahed

It's been 30 years since audiences around the world fell in love with the animated adaptation of the children's book *The Snowman*. Produced by the late British animation veteran John Coates, who passed away earlier this year, and directed by Dianne Jackson and Jimmy Murakami, the stunningly beautiful 2D project received numerous awards and an Oscar nomination for Best Animated Short in 1983.

This month, viewers in the U.K. will get a chance to see a new animated sequel to the classic, produced by London-based Lupus Films (*The Pinky & Perky Show*, *The Hive*) and written and co-directed by Hilary Audus and Joanna Harrison, both of whom worked as animators on the original film.

It all started back in the February of last year, when Lupus Films



principals Camilla Deakin and Ruth Fielding pitched the idea for a sequel to Channel 4's CCO Jay Hunt. She loved the idea, so the team started to develop concepts and designs right away. "We knew the 30th anniversary of Channel 4 was coming up and as *The Snowman* was one of the first things commissioned for the Channel when it launched back in 1982 we thought it would be nice to have a sequel to mark the anniversary," explains Deakin.

Working with a £2 million budget (approximately \$3.2 million), the animation team chose to stay close to the hand-drawn technique of the original production. Deakin says only some minor CG animation was used to depict the vehicles and keep them consistent. "We

hand-rendered them so that they mix seamlessly with the rest of the animation," she says. "Then compositing and specials were added in After Effects."

This need for handcrafting most of the animation was one of the production's biggest dilemmas, says Deakin. "Our biggest challenge has been doing all the animation and rendering by hand. At the same time, we had to make sure the film is rich, colorful and luscious to look at, so that it works for a modern audience but also sits comfortably alongside the first film."

Deakin adds that making the sequel has been a hugely rewarding experience for her team at Lupus Films. "We love the fact that we have animators working on this film who also worked on the first *Snowman* film. We love the fact that the studio is so quiet except for the gentle sound of animation paper being flicked back and forth and the occasional whir of an electric pencil sharpener. We love the fact that we have lots of recent animation school graduates who are absorbing all the traditional techniques and



learning so much from the experienced animators on the team. On top of it all, I think the Snowdog is incredibly cute and children everywhere will love him."

The producers credit John Coates for getting the ball rolling by approaching his old friend Raymond Briggs, with whom he had collaborated on several projects. In the early '80s, Briggs had said that there could be no sequel because

softened and agreed that it would be nice to give all the fans of *The Snowman* another lovely film to enjoy alongside the first."

Of course, another reason Briggs said yes to a sequel is that he knew that Coates was assembling an excellent team of people that he knew from previous productions and trusted to make a quality animated special. Deakin is quick to point out the important role the late British

and always remember to enjoy ourselves! John was a brilliant producer because he found talented creative people and allowed them space to do what they did best without too much interference. He was also very supportive of women in the industry and provided a launch pad for quite a few female producers and directors to develop their careers."

She also points out that on *The Snowman and the Snowdog*, both producers, the director and art director are all women. She also adds that Coates was very involved in the making of the special. He came up to the studio regularly for editorial meetings and had an input on all creative aspects of the film. "Just before he died we sent him a two and a half-minute trailer which we'd cut for [the TV market] MIP Junior and he loved it. He was really pleased to see how well the film was turning out. We are really sad he didn't see it completed, but we are dedicating the film to his memory and we hope that it will go out there into the world and be loved by millions of people just like the first *Snowman* film, as that is what he would have wanted."

.....
***The Snowman and the Snowdog* will premiere on Channel 4 in the U.K. on Christmas.**

"I think the fact that the film is traditionally made, and clearly made with love, will make it stand out and really appeal to the audience."

— *The Snowman and the Snowdog* producer
 Camilla Deakin

the Snowman had melted at the end of the original production. However, when the show was digitally remastered for the 20th anniversary edition, Coates convinced the author that they should add snow falling over the end credits. "At that point, we knew there was a possibility the Snowman could return," explains Deakin. "By the time the 30th anniversary came around, Raymond had

producer played in assembling the ingredients for the sequel.

"John Coates has been a huge inspiration to us for many years," she explains. "When my business partner Ruth and I set up Lupus Films, we told John that we were basing our company strategy on his—namely that we would only work on projects we felt passionate about, only work with people we liked

Rebuilding The Snowman:

For the new special, Lupus Films strove to recreate the original's illustrative, hand-drawn quality, using limited CG and hand-rendering it to maintain a coherent look.



**Producer
 Camilla Deakin
 on the current
 U.K. animation
 scene:**

"The state of the animation industry in the U.K. is interesting at the moment. It has been a very tough time of late, with license fees falling and work going abroad. People are waiting for the new animation tax credit to come in next April and when it does it will be a massive boost to our industry and a lot of new shows that are in limbo will get going. I think that smaller companies are able to survive a downturn such as we've been experiencing more easily than large companies because we've had to be more flexible to survive. Also having lower overheads when times are quiet frees us to be more inventive and react quickly to new opportunities as they arise."



Stop Motion Casts a Spell on SpongeBob

How the talented team at Screen Novelties brought a familiar 2Dtoon to 3D life in the *It's a SpongeBob Christmas!* special. by Ramin Zahed

You can call it the Rankin-Bass legacy—the reason we tend to enjoy our classic animated holiday programming spiced with a touch of stop-motion magic. It's only natural that kids who grew up watching *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* or *Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town* love to see the same technique applied to today's favorite animated characters. So when the creative team behind Nickelodeon's long-running show *SpongeBob SquarePants* decided to create a new Christmas special this year, they went straight to the folks at L.A.-based studio Screen Novelties, which specializes in stop-motion animation.

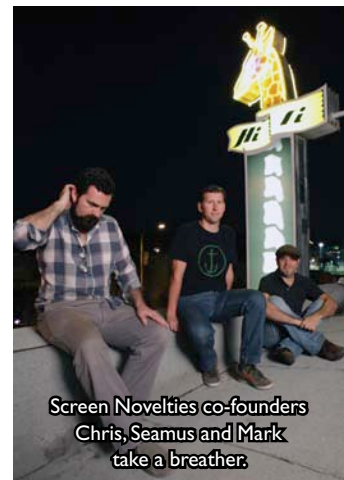
Screen Novelties had worked with *SpongeBob* creator Stephen Hillenburg and exec producer Paul Tibbitt on the 2008 theatrical release and the show's 10th anniversary special opening titles, so it made sense that they'd also produce the animation for this Christmas special. Plus, they have also done some amazing stop-motion work for TV shows such as *Robot Chicken*, *Moral*

Orel, *Chowder*, *MAD* and *The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack*. They even collaborated with film legend Ray Harryhausen on the 2002 Annie-winning short *The Story of The Tortoise & the Hare*.

"They dug one of our shorts that we'd done a while back, which was called *Graveyard Jamboree* with

Mysterious Mose, and wanted to have us apply our sensibilities to *SpongeBob*," says Screen Novelties co-founder Seamus Walsh who co-directed the special with partner Mark Caballero. "We come from the same planet as far as our sense of humor and comic sensibilities are concerned. But we also wanted to make sure that it felt like a *SpongeBob* episode."

The half-hour-long *It's a SpongeBob Christmas!*, which debuted on CBS last month and airs on Nickelodeon on December 6, finds Plankton turning everybody in Bikini Bottom from nice to naughty by feeding them some jerkonium-laced



Screen Novelties co-founders Chris, Seamus and Mark take a breather.

fruitcake. After several months of research and development, work on the show began in October of last year. Among the cool stats we dug up on the shoot: Six sets were constructed on which 60 pounds of baking soda was used as snow, 42 pounds of glitter added sparkle to the magic, 22 pounds of wood chips were used to create Sandy's tree-house floor and 20 boxes of cereal covered the coral rocks.

One of the team's biggest challenges was making sure the stop-motion version of Bikini Bottom resembled the 2D world of the series. There was also the issue of making the yellow absorbent hero of the show resemble his 2D self. "We had to make sure *SpongeBob* felt like *SpongeBob*," says Caballero. "It actually took us a few months of going back and forth to make sure it didn't feel too plastic-y and ultrar-



realistic. We ended up using a type of cushion foam that was pretty malleable and gave off a bit of a translucent yellow glow off him. It had to feel cuddly and happy-go-lucky as well as having that extra crazy element. It's not easy to translate a 2D character into a puppet: It can get ugly if you're not careful."

SpongeBob veterans Hiltenburg and Tibbett provided hands-on feedback on the production on a weekly basis. "They'd check out the weeklies and go back and forth with us on the various gags," says Walsh. "It was really a pleasurable experience when they came to visit, because we come from the same planet. It all felt very easy and natural."

About 30 people worked on the special over at Screen Novelties. "When we were doing the initial animation, it was a very busy period for all of us," says Walsh. "We came in at about 8:30 in the morning and didn't leave until midnight some days. But it all zipped by pretty quickly. We felt pretty lucky because usually executives involved with productions look at the stop-motion process as annoying, but on this special, they were very jazzed and gung-ho about it. Plus, the stop-motion community is very small, and everyone seemed to be thrilled to work on the show."

When asked to pick a favorite part of the special, both Caballero and Walsh point to the beginning minutes during which *SpongeBob* wakes up and meets the different characters. "You track down in Bikini Bottom as he wakes up, and there's a cute sincerity about the whole segment," says Walsh. Caballero adds, "We got to do some multi-media mixing of techniques here. There are some strange puppet cutaways. We wanted to keep the weird element in there. Everything that we direct has to be charming and a little bit odd as well. We believe that our heroes Rankin and Bass started it with *Rudolph*. You need to have a little bit of creepy in your holiday entertainment. It even goes back to Dickens when he introduced ghosts in *A Christmas Carol*!"

Now that they've re-imagined

SpongeBob and his pals as stop-motion heroes, the Screen Novelties guys are getting ready again to work on their own original material. In addition to several new projects, they are shopping around a feature based on their popular *Monster Sa-*

special holiday fundraiser at L.A.'s Cinefamily to raise money for The Bob Baker Marionettes, the city's 50-year-old children's theater.

"It's our way of thank-



"We had to make sure *SpongeBob* felt like *SpongeBob*. It actually took us a few months of going back and forth to make sure it didn't feel too plastic-y and ultrarealistic. We ended up using a type of cushion foam that was pretty malleable and gave off a bit of a translucent yellow glow."

— Screen Novelties' producer Mark Caballero



fari short. The pic revolves around a pair of bumbling crypto-zoologists who spring into action to save the world's most famous monsters from a ruthless big-game hunter. They've also delivered a LEGO piece for Cartoon Network's *Adventure Time* and stop-motion work for Nick's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* series. In addition, they are working on a

ing Bob Baker, who was one of the original animators at the George Pal studio," says Caballero. "It's our way of saying thanks. It was because of people like Bob that we got into stop-motion animation."

"The animation landscape has changed so dramatically over the past 15 years," adds Walsh. "Directors can choose how they do their

movies. People like Wes Anderson can do stop-motion, and you have all these people coming out of the woodwork trying their hand at different kinds of animation."

"There's more stop-motion happening in Los Angeles than ever before," says producer Chris Finnegan, who co-founded the shop with Caballero and Walsh in 2003. "We seem to have more TV work coming from Disney, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon. And this year, especially, we've seen such an appetite for stop-motion in the world of features

[*ParaNorman*, *The Pirates! Band of Misfits*, *Frankenweenie*, etc.]. Of course, it may never go head to head with CG in terms of mass appeal, it's more of a niche audience. We are always happy to do it for people who get it."

Of course, one of the reasons the team at Screen Novelties has been able to succeed in the competitive world of indie animation is their flexibility and ability to adapt to the changing needs of the market. "You have to be nimble and keep the overhead manageable," says Finnegan. "We have to be able to maintain our studio facility, keep our key staff employed, and be mindful of not getting too big. In addition to stop-motion, we also do some Muppet-style hand puppets, cutout animation and experimental stained-glass techniques. We also do 2D animation and might be working in CG in the future as well. It's all about being nimble and riding the waves. For a small company like ours, it's challenging and exciting at the same time." And that sounds a lot like life with *SpongeBob* in Bikini Bottom.

**.....
It's a *SpongeBob Christmas!* airs on Nickelodeon on December 6 at 8 p.m. The special is also available on DVD (Nickelodeon Home Ent., \$14.98). To learn more about Screen Novelties, visit www.screen-novelties.com.**

Dive into This Fantastic Cartoon Lagoon

Manny Galán and Pat Giles' new DVD project offer a hilarious mishmash of puppetry and public domain cartoons.

New York-based animation veterans Manny Galán and Pat Giles know their toons! They are the type of creative guys who have a deep passion for all forms of animated projects—even the goofy, low-budget ones that haunt the strange corners of public domain and pop culture. So, it's not surprising that their first big venture, *Captain Cornelius Cartoon's Cartoon Lagoon*, pays homage to the old-school children's shows that aired on Saturday mornings when they were growing up.

This off-the-wall special features Wet Willy Jones and Axel Rodd McGee who embark on colorful undersea voyages aboard the Manta Ray, a cartoon-retrieving vessel led by old-timey sailor Captain Cornelius Cartoon. The show, which won the recent New York Television Festival's Amazon Audience Award, is described as a love letter to pop culture and Saturday morning puppet-animated shows.

As Giles, whose animation credits include shows such as *Disney's Doug*, *PB&J Otter*, *Daria*, *Sheep in the Big City* and *Codename: Kids Next Door*, explains, "It is a very unique fusion of puppets and animation. Our characters are trapped in a cartoon-retrieving submarine that explores a lagoon, where all of these public domain cartoons are dumped." Giles says the idea for the show came from Galán. "There is a legend about an E.T. Atari game that sold so poorly, that it was dumped into a landfill.

Manny said, what if there was an actual lagoon, full of abandoned cartoons, VHS tapes, DVD's, kinescopes, etc., just floating there to be plucked out and watched again?"

Galán, who met Giles when they were both working on animated General Mills cereal commercials, adds, "You know I love to work with my friends. We worked on a self-published comic book and designed a toy line. With *Cartoon Lagoon*, it started out as a goofy thing we were

doing, and it started to look better and better and more friends wanted to get involved."

One of the great things about the *Cartoon Lagoon* experience is that you never know who or what is going to pop up. There might be some classic tales featuring Casper the Friendly Ghost and Popeye the Sailor or some hipster indie animated shorts (*Life in the Analog Age* by Gabe Swarr or *The President of the Universe* by Mike Carlo) or a visit from The Gregory Brothers or *Fairly OddParents* creator Butch Hartman. "Butch does a PSA warning kids about the dangers of music," says Galán. "It's all about recapturing the Saturday morning experience. Kids don't have the sense of appointment TV anymore, so this was our chance to recreate that sense of place for

them and to offer that block of curated TV for the viewers."

Giles says he was very excited about the reaction of the fans at the TV festival and at the New York Comic-Con. "Some students stopped by and wanted to know how we were able to create such natural-looking animation," he says. "I had to tell them that they are actual puppets (created by Julia Rosner) sewn together by human beings. We shot the puppets live in the basement of a Catholic girls' school in the Lower East Side of New York City. We put tracking marks on the puppets' faces. The animation of the faces were done with Flash, and then we added the tracing mo-cap plug-ins, composited laboriously to the faces. We thought it would be easy, but it wasn't really a short

cut! So that's how we got the unique look! We ended up using everything."

Giles and Galán cite a wide variety of influences—from *Thunderbirds* and *Howdy Doody* to the imaginative shows of Sid and Marty Krofft and the hilarious riffs of *Mystery Science Theater*. They also say they're hoping the fact that the two-hour *Cartoon Lagoon* DVD is now available on

Amazon will help generate more word of mouth about their project. "We've been talking to a bunch of folks at different studios about it, but we didn't want to take the project to them before it was finished," says Giles. "We're not quite *South Park*, and not Disney—but you can safely watch our show with the kids. We didn't want to get all these notes and have anyone tell us how to do it. We figured we wanted it to be the best show we could make before we pitched it to anyone!"

For more info, visit patmanstudios.com/cartoonlagoon.



Lagoon Legends: From left, animator Justin Roth, exec producer Pat Giles, voice actor Chris Phillips (Captain Cornelius), lead puppeteer Michael Schupbach, creator/exec producer Manny Galán and head writer Steve Borst won Amazon Studios' Audience Award at the recent New York TV Festival.

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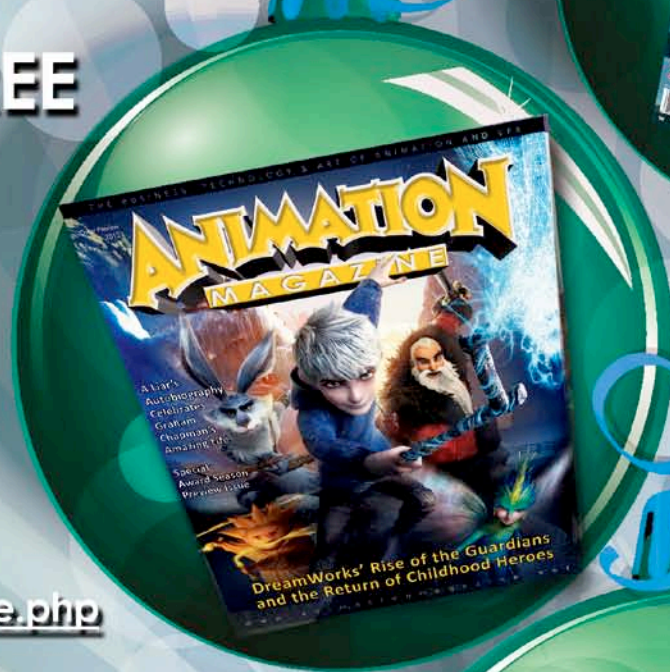
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100 Years

From Stag Beetles to World-Class Cinema

The Russian Animation Film Association wrote to let us know that Russian animation is celebrating a major milestone this year: It's been 100 years since **Wladyslaw Starewicz** created his first animated short, *The Beautiful Lukanida*. The Moscow-born director, began his career as the director of the Natural History in Kovno, Lithuania. He began to experiment with animation when he decided to recreate the fight between two stag beetles using articulated insect puppets. The *Beautiful Lukanida* is described as a fairy tale for beetles and received much acclaim around the world, and was followed by the *Revenge of the Kinematograph Cameraman*, a 1912 short about infidelity and jealousy in insect society. Starewicz's 41-minute 1913 film *The Night Before Christmas* was the first example of the use of stop-motion and live action in the same scene.

Since then, Russian animators have played a huge role in pushing the artistic boundaries of the medium. Iconic artists such as Alexander Petrov (*The Old Man and the Sea*), Yuriy Norshtein (*Tale of Tales*, *Little Hedgehog in the Fog*) and Stanislav Sokolov (*The Winter's Tale*) have continued to keep the flame of Russian animation alive through the years. In recent years, Russian artists have ventured into the CG animated feature world with titles such as 2010's *Space Dogs* directed by Inna Evlannikova and Svyatoslav Ushakov (Center of National Film) and Vlad Barbe and Maksim Sveshnikov's *Snow Queen* (Wizart Animation) which will be released this month in the country.

Commemorating Russian animation's century, The Russian Animation Film Association was formed in 2012 to raise awareness of the studios and their interests around the world. The Yuriy Norshtein Fund, Soyuzmultfilm studio, and animation film school SHAR are among the org's founders. Among the studios participating in the association are RIKI (*Kikoriki* TV series), Animaccord Animation Studio (*Masha and the Bear*), Airplane (*The Fixies*) and Toonbox (*Qumi-Qumi*). The first RAFA meeting was held as part of the Open Russian Festival of Animated Film in Suzdal 2012.

RAFA aims to build the animation industry in Russia, attract state and private investments, participate in legislative initiative for the country's animation industry developing in Russia and to increase the level of education for animation professional staff. The Association seeks to join forces with the other global animation communities, distributors, companies, studios and government organizations in order to develop, promote and co-produce animated films and TV series.

As part of RAFA's activities this year, Russian animation had an important presence at global festivals and markets such as Annecy and MIPCOM. Eighteen animation studios participated at the Annecy festival and a wide range of companies reported sales and partnerships at the MIPCOM market in France in October. We hope to cover a lot more about this important organization's activities in 2013. Starewicz and the country's early animation pioneers would be quite proud of their countrymen's achievements a century later.



35 Years

35 Candles in His Lasagna

He may hate Mondays, but he sure has weathered plenty of them—everyone's favorite grouchy feline **Garfield** is celebrating his 35th birthday this year! The fuzzy orange sourpuss made his first appearance in Jim Davis's comic strip in 1978, debuting in 41 newspapers on June 19 through United Feature Syndicate. One interesting point of trivia is that the strip originally centered on Garfield's owner, Jon Arbuckle, and the publishers all turned it down asking Davis to focus on that hilarious cat! While it wasn't until 1982 that he made his cartoon debut in CBS' *Here Comes Garfield* special, the cantankerous kitty has become a staple of the genre, with 12 primetime specials, seven seasons of *Garfield and Friends* (1988-94), two theatrical features, three CG home video movies, videogames, a popular website and now Cartoon Network/Boomerang's hilarious CG series *The Garfield Show*, which launched in 2008 to coincide with Garfield's big 3-0!

With so many adventures under his metaphorical belt, we were relieved to get the inside scoop from Paws, Incorporated—founded by Davis—to pick out some of Garfield's top moments and get a few choice morsels straight from the celebrated cat. For instance, did you know that the domain gmail.com originally belonged to Garfield's web portal before Google got it? Or that in 1989, Garfield became a real-life hero to five-year-old Cynthia Guerrero when a Garfield sticky toy in the window of her father's truck deflected a bullet from a random drive-by shooter in Corpus Christie, Texas? Not so lazy now, is he!

Some more Garfield thought bubbles: The silliest thing he ever did was pose nude for *Playgirl* magazine (eat your heart out, Tyrese Gibson). His biggest role model is himself, obviously, but he does admire Sylvester. "I just know he's going to get Tweety some day," he purrs. "Tweety's last words will be, 'I did! I did taw...AWWWWK!'" And his ultimate fantasy adventure? Why, to go back in time and sit at King Arthur's Round Table as the noble Sir Lunch-a-lot. Hmm, sounds like a good premise for his next film!

www.garfield.com



30 Years

Still Rockin' It

Prepare to feel old: The lovable mop-headed denizens of **Fraggle Rock** are turning 30 this year! Yes, it was back in 1983 that Jim Henson introduced the world to the underground dwellers in the *Fraggle Rock* TV series, which debuted January 10 on Canada's CBC, HBO in the U.S. and U.K.'s ITV, enjoying five phenomenal seasons until the spring of 1987—its cult status theme song also known as “Dance Your Cares Away” (written by Philip Balsam and Dennis Lee) even hit the Top 40 charts in Britain. After their puppeteered escapades, the Fraggles went on to star in their own NBC cartoon co-produced by Marvel Prod. and made many appearances visiting with their Muppet friends on TV shows, specials and in films. Happily, fans will be getting a fresh dose of Fragglicious fun as The Jim Henson Company gets ready to launch a new preschool CG series called *Doozers*, featuring the industrious little builders of *Fraggle Rock* fame.

Of course, Fraggles alone did not build the house of Henson, now headed by Jim's daughter, CEO Lisa Henson, and president & COO Peter Schube, who has been with the company since 1988. As The Jim Henson Company (founded in 1955) reps remind us, they have a lot to be proud of: “We created talking frogs, pigs, bears and monsters that are beloved by generations around the world, and new worlds like *Fraggle Rock* where kids could learn about tolerance, diversity and living in harmony with each other and the Earth.” In fact, they tell us that when Jim started developing the celebrated show, he told his team he wanted to make a show that would create world peace. Now with cool new toons like *Sid the Science Kid*, *Dinosaur Train* and *Doozers*, that forward-thinking idealism is as strong as ever. While we love JHC's in-house mantra—“When in doubt, throw penguins”—you can't beat the sincerity of their late founder's words:

“When I was young, my ambition was to be one of the people who made a difference in this world. My hope still is to leave the world a little bit better for my having been here.” Mission accomplished, Jim!

www.henson.com



BRB's Willy Fog Hits 30

How could we have another anniversary issue without the folks at Spain's busy animation studio BRB letting us know about one of their properties hitting a landmark event? This year, it's the studio's fantastic take on Jules Verne's classic *Around the World in 30 Days* that is celebrating its 30th birthday. This joint project with Nippon Animation first ran on RTVE in 1983, but it found a home in many TV stations around the world. Exec produced by studio founder Claudio Biern, ***Around the World with Willy Fog*** (*La vuelta al mundo de Willy Fog*), the show centered on Willy Fog (the show's lead, depicted as a lion), Rigodon (a lynx) and Romy (a panther), who were pursued by dogs. The English version of the show found a perfect home on the CBBC in the U.K. and RTE in Ireland and also traveled to Japan in 1987. The toon even inspired a live-action musical show in Spain during its 25th anniversary.

Carlos Biern, the studio's tireless head of co-productions, tells us 2013 is going to be another spectacular year for the company—with new TV shows such as *Invizimals*, *Filly and Mica*, and features such as *Super Bernard* and *Dogtanian* waiting in the wings. Judging from all the good work BRB is doing, Spain's financial crisis will be a distant memory before we know it.

Website: www.brb.es



10 Years

Jam Media Celebrates a Sweet Decade

The brilliant team at Dublin-based **Jam Media** have a lot of reasons to celebrate this month. Not only did they win a Children's BAFTA award for their popular live-action/animated hybrid series *Roy* and took home Cartoon Forum's Producer of the Year honor in September, they're also marking their 10th anniversary as one of Ireland's animation studios. "This is the third time we have



Terrific Trio: From left, Jam's Mark Cumberton, John Rice and Alan Shannon

been nominated so we are obviously thrilled that we have won a BAFTA," said Jam Media's CEO John Rice. "The competition was stiff and this award, coming just after the re-commission of a double series of *Roy* by CBBC, proves that the series and the character of Roy really seems to resonate with viewers in the UK, Ireland and beyond."

Formed by John Rice, Alan Shannon and Mark Cumberton in 2002, Jam Media has steadily grown over the past decade, delivering innovative shows

such as *Funky Fables*, *PICME*, *Roy* and *Tilly and Friends* for broadcasters all over the world. In addition, the company has been on the cutting edge of user-friendly technologies, introducing its proprietary Headhunter software long before customizing animation on the Web was a common phenomenon. The tool allows personalized animation for broadcast, web and mobile application, and it also includes a render engine, which allows users to easily share their customized animation and video clips on social network sites.

Jam Media is in the midst of creating 60 new jobs as part of an 8.5 million euro investment in the animation sector. It definitely sounds like the studio's winning recipe is getting sweeter with passing year. Here's to many more decades of innovative animation and sticky content from the expert team of Jammers.

Website: www.jammedia.ie



Jam Media's *Roy* took home a Children's Bafta last month.

5 Years

On Fire for Animation!

Fans of quirky modern toon comedies will be well familiar with the work of our next celebrants, **Big Jump Productions Inc.**, who this year celebrate five years in the biz. Located in Ottawa, Ontario, Big Jump was founded in 2008 by animation veteran Rick Morrison, president (who also co-founded Funbag Animation Studios), and Sheridan College alumnus Cory Morrison, vice president and director, and Rod Amador, also vice president/director. The studio strives to maintain a standard of excellence that can be seen in its animation service work for unique series like Comedy Central's *Ugly Americans* and *Brickleberry*.

Prez Rick Morrison shares with us that audiences can look forward to more of the studio's keen work on CMT's upcoming *Bounty Hunters* toon, based on Jeff Foxworthy's Blue Collar Comedy troupe. He also revealed quite an impressive anecdote when asked what the best thing Big Jump ever did was: Deliver season four of Disney Junior's *The Secret World of Benjamin Bear* ... while the studio was burning! "We were delivering the last few episodes of a 13 x 22 series, and the building our studio was in caught fire," he recalls. "Thank goodness we stored digital files off site and set up a virtual server—we were able to temporarily relocate overnight and continue production and meet our delivery obligations."

We bet it's times like those that Big Jump's in-house motto, "Smile! After all, we are making cartoons!" is a great rallying cry.

www.bigjumpproductions.com



*Producing in both **Flash** and **Harmony**,
our unique tra-digital pipeline is grounded in
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Toon Town Anniversaries of 2013

75 Years Ago:



Porky's Hare Hunt

Bugs Bunny makes his first appearance in **Porky's**

Hare Hunt.

Jean Painlevé and **Rene Bertrand's** **Barbe-Bleue**



(Bluebeard) sets a new standard in Claymation.

Dick Rickard's adaptation of the children's book

Ferdinand the Bull is released. The short wins an Oscar in 1939.

70 Years Ago:

The **Fred Quimby**-directed Tom and Jerry toon, **The Yankee Doodle Mouse** is released in June. It wins the Oscar for Best Animated Short the following year.



The Yankee Doodle Mouse

Norman McLaren creates **National Film Board of Canada's** animation division.



Victory Through Air Power

Among the noteworthy shorts of the year are **Jack-Wabbit and the Beanstalk**, **Victory Through Air Power**, **El Gaucho Goofy**, **Private Pluto**, **Saludos Amigos** and **Red Hot Riding Hood**.

60 Years Ago:

Disney's **Peter Pan**, directed by Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson opens in theaters on Feb. 5.

Shorts highlights include **Duck Amuck**, **Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2th Century**, **Jerry and Jumbo** and **Magoo Slept Here**.

Bill Hurtz's **The Unicorn in the Garden** is UPA's first cartoon special.

Art Clokey introduces his charming green hero, **Gumby**, in **Gumbasis**.



Gumby

Ward Kimball and Charles A. Nichols offer a crash course in the history of musical instruments in the Oscar-winning short **Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Bloom**.



Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2th Century

65 Years Ago:

Jay Ward and **Alexander Anderson** form TV Arts Productions in Hollywood.

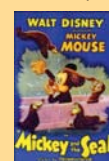
The Oscar-winning **The Little Orphan** (directed by Fred Quimby) and the Oscar-nominated **Mickey and the Seal** (Charles A. Nichols) are among the big short releases of 1948.

Disney offers **Melody Time**, featuring **Once Upon a Wintertime**, **Bumble Boogie**, **Johnny Appleseed**, **Little Toot**, **Blame It on the Samba** and **Pecos Bill**.

Marvin the Martian first appears in **Haredevil Hare** on July 24, 1948.



The Little Orphan



Marvin the Martian

55 Years Ago:

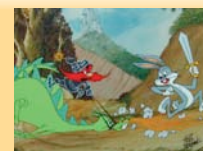
Friz Freleng directs the Oscar-winning short **Knighty Knight Bugs**, in which Bugs Bunny appears as a court jester who dukes it out with the Black Night (Yosemite Sam).



The Huckleberry Hound Show

Les Clark directs the Disney short, **Paul Bunyan**.

Hanna-Barbera's popular **The Huckleberry Hound Show** debuts in syndication.



Knighty Knight Bugs

35 Years Ago:

Watership Down,

Richard Adams' popular novel about a rabbit clan, becomes an underrated animated feature directed by **Martin Rosen** and **Tony Guy**.



Watership Down



Special Delivery

The National Film Board of Canada continues its affair with Oscar with **Special Delivery**, directed by **Eunice Macaulay** and **John**

Weldon. **Charles Swenson** and **Fred Wolf** present **The Mouse and His Child**. New shows debuting this fall on TV are **The All-New Popeye Hour**, **Baggy Pants and the Nitwits**, **The Fantastic Four**, **Godzilla Power Hour**, **The New Superfriends** and **Fang Face**. **Rip Van Winkle**, **Will Vinton**'s stop-motion version of the famous Irving tale, hits theaters and lands an Oscar nom the following year.

Ralph Bakshi's adaption of **The Lord of the Rings** comes to theaters stateside in November.



The Lord of the Rings

30 Years Ago:

Vfx masters **Richard Edlund**, **Dennis Muren**, **Ken Ralston** and **Phil Tippett** work their magic once again in **Star Wars: Return of the Jedi**.

Cosgrove-Hall's award-winning special **The Wind in the Willows** debuts in the U.K.



The Wind in the Willows

La Lanterna Magica studio opens its doors in Italy.

John M. Mills and **Elphin Lloyd-Jones** found **Telemagination Studio** in the U.K.

Indie animator **John Canemaker**

offers the acclaimed short, **Bottom's Dream**.

Don Bluth presents the trendsetting videogame **Dragon's Lair** in June.



Fraggle Rock

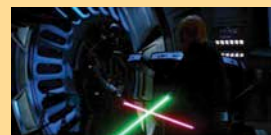
Jim Henson's **Fraggle Rock** premieres on HBO.

Among the freshman shows on TV this year are **Alvin and the Chipmunks**, **The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show**, **Dungeons and Dragons**, **He-Man and the Masters of the Universe**, **The Littles**, **Mr. T** and **The Pac-Man/Rubik the Amazing Cube Hour**.

Jimmy Picker's claymated **Sundae in New York** offers a whimsical take on the Big Apple.

Directed by **Burny Mattinson**, **Mickey's Christmas Carol** puts a Disney spin on the Dickens' classic.

Don Bluth, **Gary Goldman** and **John Pomeroy** form **The Bluth Group**.



Star Wars: Return of the Jedi



Dragon's Lair



Mickey's Christmas

50 Years Ago:

Penned by **Mel Brooks** and directed by **Ernest Pintoff**, the Oscar-winning short, **The Critic**, centers on an old man who's trying to understand abstract animation.

Tennessee Tuxedo and His Tales premieres on CBS this year.

Animated version of **Osamu Tezuka**'s **Astro Boy** premieres in Japan.

Friz Freleng and David DePatie form the **DePatie-Freleng**



Enterprises studio.

Young Arthur learns about his legacy from Merlin in



The Sword in the Stone

Disney's **The Sword in the Stone**, released in theaters in December.

45 Years Ago:



Yellow Submarine

London's **TVC** finishes animating the Beatles' movie **Yellow Submarine**, directed by **George Dunning**. **Wolfgang**

Reitherman and his team at Disney bring A.A. Milne's beloved bear to animated life in the Oscar-winning short **Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day**. **Faith** and **John Hubley** wrap their Oscar-nominated short **Windy Day**.



Winnie the Pooh



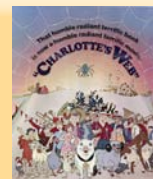
The Archie Show

This year's TV debuts include Filmation's **The Archie Show** and Hanna-Barbera's **The Banana Splits**, **The New Adventures of Huck Finn** and **Wacky Races**.

Directed by **Jimmy Murakami**, the Oscar-nominated **The Magic Pear Tree** arrives in theaters.

40 Years Ago:

Directed by **Charles Nichols** and **Iwao Takamoto**, Hanna-Barbera's **Charlotte's Web** offers a musical take on the



Heavy Traffic

E.B. White Classic, featuring the voices of **Debbie Reynolds** and **Paul Lynde**.

Ralph Bakshi's **Heavy Traffic** opens in theaters in August.

In September, TV debuts Hanna-Barbera's

Jeannie, **Speedy Buggy**, **Superfriends** and **Yogi's Gang** and Filmation's **Lassie's Rescue Rangers**, **Mission: Magic!**, **My Favorite Martians** and **Star Trek!**

On Nov. 8, Disney releases **Robin Hood**, directed by **Wolfgang Reitherman**, which features the Oscar-nominated song "Love" and some 100,000



Robin Hood

painted cels and 800 painted backgrounds.

25 Years Ago:

1988 is a tremendous year for anime movies as **Isao Takahata's** widely influential *Grave of the Fireflies*, **Hayao Miyazaki's** charming *My Neighbor Totoro* and **Katsuhiro**



My Neighbor Totoro



Garfield

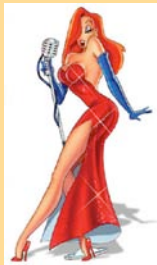
Otomo's dark, futuristic epic *Akira* open to popular and critical acclaim. Meanwhile, the TV landscape in the U.S. is a different story as shows such as *Alf Tales*, *Beany and Cecil*, *Garfield and Friends*, *The New Yogi Bear Show*, *A Pup Named Scooby-Doo*, *The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*,

Transformers and *Slimer and the Real Ghostbusters* make their debut.

Robert Zemeckis mixes live action and animation to superb results in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, which wins over auds and nabs four Oscars, one for director **Richard Williams**.

John Lasseter's Oscar-winning, CG-animated short *Tin Toy* gives the world a glimpse of Pixar's fantastic future.

George Scribner's *Oliver & Company* delivers a musical, canine take on *Oliver Twist*, with the voices of Billy Joel, Bette Midler and Dom DeLuise.



Who Framed Roger Rabbit

20 Years Ago:

Sweet and pastoral are how you can describe the two new British series of the year **Telemagination's** *The Animals of Farthing Wood* and **TVC's** *The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends*.



The Animals of Farthing Wood

Nick Park and **Aardman Animations** offer the brilliant plasticine-animated *Wallace & Gromit in The Wrong Trousers*, which wins an Oscar in 1994.



Wallace & Gromit in the Wrong Trousers

Warner Bros. release the stylish *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*, directed by **Eric Radomski** and **Bruce W. Timm**.

Directed by **Phil Roman**, *Tom and Jerry: The Movie* opens in U.S. theaters.

TV debuts this year include *Rocko's Modern Life*,

PB&J Otter, *The World of Eric Carle*, *The Pink Panther*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Family Dog*, *The Adventures of Blinky Bill*, *Animaniacs*, *Biker Mice from Mars* and *Madeline*.

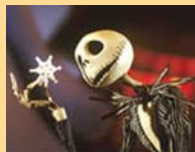


The Pink Panther

David Fine and **Alison Snowden** hit the jackpot with their witty 2D short *Bob's Birthday*, which wins an Oscar in 1995.

Steve Oakes, **Susan Holden-Squibb**, **Richard Winkler** and **David Starr** form **Curious Pictures** in New York City.

Tim Burton hits another high point in this career with the stop-motion animated musical feature *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.



The Nightmare Before Christmas

Mike Judge's crude duo, *Beavis and Butt-head*, debut on MTV on March 8.

15 Years Ago:

MTV spoofs stars and their inflated egos with the clever claymated series *Celebrity Deathmatch*.

Nelvana animates *Bob and Margaret*, a series spinoff of Snowden/Fine's *Bob's Birthday*.

Nicktoons Studios opens in Burbank in March.

Peter Hannan gives the world his hybrid creation, *CatDog*, which debuts in April on Nickelodeon.



CatDog



Mulan

Tony Bancroft and **Barry Cook's** lush feature *Mulan* offers audiences a Disney heroine to admire in June.

Fred Seibert launches **Frederator Studios** and serves up his cool anthology series *Oh Yeah! Cartoons* on Nickelodeon in July.

In Japan, audiences flock to theaters to catch *Pokemon: The Movie*.

DreamWorks releases *Antz*, the first 3D-animated insect feature of the year, as well as the 2D Biblical tale *The Prince of Egypt*.



Pokemon: The Movie

French audiences.

TV animation is on a roll this year as *Godzilla: The Series*, *Disney's Hercules*, *Histerial!*, *Initial D*, *Invasion America*, *Cowboy Bebop*, *Pinky*, *Elmyra and the Brain*, *Silver Surfer*, *Stressed Eric*, *Toonsylvania* and *The Wild Thornberrys* all make their debut.

Created by **William Joyce**, Nelvana's Emmy-winning preschool show, *Rolie Polie Olie* pushes the CG envelope.

Craig McCracken's *The Powerpuff Girls* begin their fight against the forces of evil.

John Lasseter and **Andrew Stanton's** *A Bug's Life* reminds audiences of Pixar's competitive edge over other studios.



A Bug's Life

Among the other animated pics of the year are *Perfect Blue*, *The Rugrats Movie*, *Lupin III*, *The Batman/Superman Movie* and *Galaxy Express: Eternal Fantasy*.

Don Hertzfeldt's *Billy's Balloon*, **Sylvain Chomet's** *Old Lady and the Pigeons* and **Chris Wedge's** Oscar-winning *Bunny* are three of the year's favorite shorts.

10 Years Ago:

Adult animation has its share of hits and misses with **Gary the Rat**, **Stripperella** and **Ren & Stimpy's Adult Party Cartoon** premiering on Spike TV.

Cartoon Network unveils **Star Wars: Clone Wars**, directed by **Genndy Tartakovsky**,



Star Wars: Clone Wars

as well as **Jackson Publick** and **Doc Hammer's The Venture Bros.** **Mike Young Productions** brings



Stripperella

Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks to PBS.

Klasky Csupo and **Nick** age the Rugrats kids in **All Grown Up**.

Paris-based **Marathon Animation** follows up *Totally Spies* with **Martin Mystery**.



Teen Titans

Warner Bros. Animation offers **Duck Dodgers**, **Teen Titans** and **Xiaolin Showdown**, while Disney TV Animation serves up **Lilo & Stitch: The Series**. **Aardman's Creature Comforts** becomes a TV series in the U.K.

Andrew Stanton and **Lee Unkrich** delight audiences with **Finding Nemo**,



Finding Nemo

which becomes one of the most popular animated features of all time and wins the Oscar for Best Animated Feature the following year.

DreamWorks releases **Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas** in theaters and opens **Shrek 4-D** in special park venues.

The studio's specialty label imports **Satoshi Kon's Millennium Actress** to the U.S.

Fredator Studios delivers **Rob Renzetti's My Life as a Teenage Robot** on Nickelodeon.

101 Dalmatians 2, **Brother Bear** and **Piglet's Big Movie** are three of Disney's traditionally animated movies of the year.

Sylvain Chomet's acclaimed **The Triplets of Belleville**

becomes an artistic hit in France and nabs two Oscars in 2004. Other movies of the year include **Raining Cats and Dogs**, **The Dog, the General and the Birds**, **Animatic**, **El Cid**, **Wonderful Days**, **Doggy Pool**, **The Rain Children** and **Rugrats Go Wild**.



The Triplets of Belleville

Warner Bros.' **Looney Tunes: Back in Action** combines live action with animation.

2003 emerges as a strong year for animated shorts: **Adam Elliot's Harvie Krumpet** leads the pack (and wins the Oscar). Other big contenders include the Disney/Dali collaboration **Destino**, directed by **Dominique Monfery**, **Bud Luckey's Boundin**, **Carlos Saldanha's Gone Nutty** and **Christopher Hinton's Nibbles**.

5 Years Ago:

Dan Povenmire and **Jeff "Swampy" Marsh's** Emmy-winning series **Phineas and Ferb** premieres on Disney Channel in February.

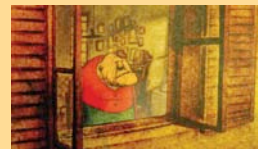


Phineas and Ferb

Other big TV debuts of the year include Nick Jr.'s **Ni Hao, Kai-Lan**, Cartoon Network's **Ben 10: Alien Force**, Nickelodeon's **The Mighty B!**, Studio B's **Ricky Sprocket: Show Biz Kid**, Little Airplane's **3rd and Bird**, and Cartoon Network's **The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack**.

The first quarter sees the release of animated features such as **Jimmy Hayward** and **Steve Martino's** Blue Sky movie **Horton Hears a Who**, **Sita Sings the Blues** by Nina Paley, which wins the Annecy Festival Cristal for Best Feature, and **Bill Plympton's** highly original indie, **Idiots and Angels**.

Some of the acclaimed animated shorts of the year are **Alan Smith & Adam Foulkes' This Way Up**, **Doug Sweetland's Presto**, **Francois Joubert's French Roast**, **Nick Park's Wallace & Gromit in A Matter of Loaf and Death**, **Konstantin Bronzit's Lavatory Lovestory**, **Emud Mokhberi** and **Thierry Marchand's Oktapodi**. **The House of Small Cubes** by **Kunio Kato** wins the Oscar for Best Animated Short in 2009.



The House of Small Cubes

Disney legend **Ollie Johnston** passes away on April 14, 2008 in Sequim, Washington.

Ari Folman's powerful animated feature **Waltz with Bashir** becomes Israel's official entry in the Oscar race.

Summer features include Ben Stassen's 3-D **Fly Me to the Moon** and Anthony Leondis' **Igor**, **Kirk De Micco's Space Chimps**



Waltz with Bashir

This year's new fall toons include Cuppa Coffee's **Life's a Zoo**, HBO's **The Life and Times of Tim**, Cartoon Network's **Star Wars: The Clone Wars**, MGM's **Spaceballs: The Animated Series** and Henson's **Sid the Science Kid**, Studio B's **Kid vs Kat**, Warner Bros.' **Batman: The Brave and the Bold**, Porchlight Ent.'s **The Secret Saturdays** and Nicktoons' **Making Fiends**.

Peanuts animator, director and voice artist **Bill Melendez** dies on September 2, 2008.

European titles of the year include **David Rubin** and **Juan C. Pena's Spirit of the Forest** and **Jacques-Remy Girerd's Mia et le Migou**.)

Among the many theatrical animated titles of the year are Fathom Studios' much-maligned CG project **Delgo**, Sam Fell's **The Tale of Despereaux** (Universal), **A-Film's Niko and the Way to the Stars** and **Brdley Raymond's Tinker Bell** feature. Directed by Raul Garcia



Bolt



WALL-E

and Manuel Sicilia and produced by Antonio Banderas, **The Missing Lynx** hits a high note for Spanish features in December.

This year's big Oscar contenders are DreamWorks' **Kung Fu Panda** (directed by **John Stevenson** and **Mark Osborne**),

Disney's CG-animated 3-D pic **Bolt** (**Chris Williams** and **Byron Howard**) and Pixar's **WALL-E** (directed by **Andrew Stanton**), which goes on to win the prize in 2009. ■

Oswald and Mickey Together Again!

Game designer Warren Spector spills the beans on the new *Epic Mickey 2* release and tells us how much he loved playing with older Disney characters and long-forgotten park attractions.

Oswald the Lucky Rabbit is having quite a year. Almost 85 years after making his big screen debut in the Universal short *Trolley Troubles*, Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks' fascinating character is back in the spotlight again. Earlier this year, Oswald made a big splash at the Telluride Film Festival with a new restored version of his 1928 classic *Hungry Hobos*. This holiday season, he will be once again capturing the imagination of gamers all over the world as he and Mickey Mouse return to Cartoon Wasteland in *Epic Mickey 2: The Power of Two*, a world inhabited by forgotten Disney characters and theme park attractions. We recently had the chance to interview Warren Spector, the award-winning game designer behind both *Epic Mickey* games, as well as titles such as *Thief: Deadly Shadows*, *Deus Ex*, *Wings of Glory*, *Ultima* and the *Wing Commander* series.

When did you begin work on *Epic Mickey 2*?

Warren Spector: The answer I think you're looking for is that Disney's *Epic Mickey 2* took about two years to make—a relatively short development cycle for me! In a sense we started doing real work on the game around January of 2011—there was some light-weight conceptual work happening for a couple of months before that but, really, the team was resting up from the first game, which shipped in November of 2010 and didn't hit the ground running until after the new year. In another sense, though, we started working on the second Mickey game before we ever got rolling on the first one. I had a pretty good idea of the high level storyline and gameplay features I wanted to include in a second game, and a third, actually, right from the start. That stuff was always in the back of our minds, even during the first game's development

What did you love about the new gig? How is it different from your previous work?

As a life-long animation and Disney fan, I just feel so honored to have been able to return Mickey Mouse to a place of prominence in the videogame world. People forget that he was a pretty big deal in the Sega Genesis/Super Nintendo era, but he hadn't been in a game in a long time when my studio started working with him. Even more than that, we got to put Mickey at the heart of an epic adventure, something no one had done since...man, maybe since the great Floyd Gottfredson comic strips of the 1930s and '40s! And beyond that, to be able to bring back Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, Walt Disney's first cartoon star... Come on, what Disney fan wouldn't



jump at the chance to do that?

What's different about the Disney *Epic Mickey* games from my previous work? Less than you might think! Obviously, the content and tone of a Mickey Mouse game, even one as sort of dark in tone as this one, is going to be different from the M-rated dystopic real world SF games and fantasy adventures I've done before. But from a gameplay standpoint, there's a foundation, an underlying philosophy, that says games should be about players telling their own stories, solving problems the way they want and dealing with the consequences.



What were the joys and headaches of bringing a classic character like Oswald back to animated life in this game?

Oswald's such a great character! Honestly, I don't think there were any headaches at all associated with him—just joy. You look at the Disney-era Oswald cartoons and just marvel at how cartoony a character he was. He stretched like taffy, removed his head and used it like a bowling ball, swam through the air, got himself squished into dozens of tiny versions of himself, and separated himself from his shadow to be in two places at once. And don't even get me started on all the uses Disney

recreate in 3D, using our Mickey model, real moments from 2D Mickey cartoons. They showed me side-by-side images of our Mickey going through the same paces as his 2D counterpart. When I couldn't tell which was which, I knew the team was good to go. We did the same with Oswald on this game.

But one of the things that defines the Disney *Epic Mickey* games is the variety of visual styles represented. We had pre-rendered 3D CGI sequences to open and close the game—those were done by an outfit called Plastic Wax in Australia. And then we had 2D animation, sort of like storyboard or concept art come to life, for our internal storytelling moments. Those were done by an Austin animation house called Powerhouse. Love those guys!

How much homework did you have to do for this game?

"Have" to do? Probably, not much. By the time we finished the first *Epic Mickey* game, everyone on the Junction Point team was steeped in Disney history! But we certainly chose to do a lot of homework! We did a ton of research—online, watching films, visiting the Parks and working with the amazing folks at the Disney archives. As much as we could, we tried to live by the rule that everything in the game should be inspired by something real from Disney's past. The concept artists started submitting their work together with all their references—they knew if they didn't, I, or one of the art directors, would ask them the dreaded question, "Where did that come from?" If they didn't have an answer, it was back to the drawing board—literally!

What are some of the standout qualities of the Oswald character?

Well, for starters, he's a little envious of Mickey's success! Who wouldn't be? I mean, the way I've always thought of the character, he's the older brother who feels he's been rejected by his dad in favor of a younger brother who's stolen the life that should have been his. You'd be resentful, too! Of course, by the end of the first game, Oswald and Mickey had hung out enough, and Oswald had seen Mickey's truly heroic nature, so

and Ub Iwerks came up with for Oswald's ears! It really was a joy borrowing ideas and personality traits from classic Oswald shorts and translating them into in-game action.

Where was the animation done?

All of the 3D animation—the in-game stuff—was done right here at Junction Point [in Austin]. We had nine animators on the project and they just killed it. Capturing the essence of classic, 2D Disney animation in a 3D world was a challenge, but the team nailed it. The coolest thing the team did—this was back on the first Mickey game—was

Old School Style, New School Play: *The Epic Mickey 2* team worked hard to make sure most of the designs in the game were inspired by old Disney toons, attractions and characters.



they mended fences. That doesn't mean there aren't still occasional disagreements, a little tension, but they're brothers—there's always going to be a little tension! To me, though, Oswald's more than an envious, resentful rabbit, of course. He's a lot like Mickey in some ways; friendly, never gives up, that sort of thing. But he's a little quicker to get angry—Mickey pretty much doesn't get mad—and he's more trusting, more naïve and even more mischievous than Mickey is. He knows his luck will see him through.

toys and, well, everything Mickey has! Oswald deserves to be as big a star as Mickey and my team and I are going to do everything we can to see that the Lucky Rabbit gets his own star on the Walk of Fame in Hollywood!

Can you tell us a bit about how the new game is different from the first *Epic Mickey* outing?

Disney's *Epic Mickey 2: The Power of Two* tells an all-new story, features some new forgotten characters and takes players to some new lands. That's just what you'd expect in a sequel. But the

new classic has songs, so *Epic Mickey 2* does, too. I think people who played the first game will find lots to like in the sequel, and people who didn't play the first game. And now that we're on a bunch of different platforms, not just on the Wii, like the first game, people who didn't play the first game will be able to jump right in and have a great time.

Why did Oswald end up with a magic remote control in this outing?

We wanted to give Oswald a set of abilities that was unique, different from Mickey. If you're making a co-op game, where two characters work together to overcome game challenges, you want each character to have abilities that complement, rather than duplicate, the other character's. Mickey has his brush, that allows him to use Paint and Thinner to draw and erase toon things in the world of Wasteland. Oswald has a remote control that allows him to affect electrical, mechanical and audio-animatronic things that give Mickey a heck of a hard time. What's easy for Mickey is hard for Oswald and vice versa. That's the kind of the heart of co-op play.

What is your creative process like when you tackle a massive project like this one?

How much time do you have?! My creative process starts by asking myself a series of questions—things like “what's the thing in this game that no one's ever seen before?” and “what fantasy are we fulfilling and/or what experi-

GAMES

ence are we providing that players already understand and desire?” When I can answer all of those questions, I sort of plan out in my own mind what three games could look like—what story could I tell in game 1, game 2 and game 3? What game features would I introduce in a game 1, 2 and 3? It's not that I expect I'll literally tell those stories or use those features, but I need to know that, if I'm going to spend six to 10 years of my life living in a world, playing with some characters, I need to know that I'm not going to be bored stiff!

Anyway, once I have that worked out—and I don't even tell the team about that stuff, most of the time—you start brainstorming. All that thinking provides creative constraints within which the team has to work but, as long as they stay in that “creative box” that belongs to me, the team, especially the leads, kind of has to run with it. I get one more vote than everyone on the team combined—on story, gameplay features, visual style, you name it—but if I ever have to use that extra vote, I've kind of failed to communicate what game we're making. It's my problem, not the team's problem. I try to leave the details of execution in the hands of my discipline leads, working with their team members. When everyone feels a sense of creative control, magic happens.

We had a lot of people working on the game. Wrangling all those cats, creating a single, coherent piece of work, was pretty crazy! If I stopped to think about how crazy it is, I'd probably never make another game—but I love this stuff, so I guess I must be crazy. How's that for a non-answer to what seemed like a simple question! ■

Becky Cline, director of Disney Archives, on Oswald:

“Oswald is a great character and Warren Spector loves him. He has certainly earned his moniker, Lucky! He's creative and loves to solve problems—he is very good at using his body parts to fix things. He uses his foot (he's a lucky rabbit) when he needs good luck; he paddles his canoe with his ears. Both kids and adults can enjoy his wit and creativity. He's also an extreme character—with the highs and lows of most entertaining characters. Plus, he's something of a lothario with the ladies, so he pushes the envelope more than Mickey. We are going to be seeing a lot of him in the future!”

Do you think we're going to see a lot more of him in the future now that the copyright issues [with Universal] have been taken care of?

hope we see a lot more of Oswald in the future! Obviously, I hope he appears in many more games. But you're already seeing him on t-shirts and pins and the like. There are already plush toys and Oswald ears and holiday ornaments. That's all great, but what I really want to see is new Oswald cartoons and vinyl

new game features several all-new things that might surprise some folks. First, there's two-player cooperative play—one player can play as Mickey but, at any time, a second player can join in and play as Oswald. Together, Mickey and Oswald can do things that Mickey can't do alone, so that changes things pretty significantly in the game. Also, we've added songs. Yeah. Songs. How can you claim to be making a game that honors 80 years of Disney's creative history and not have songs? Every Dis-

Disney's *Epic Mickey 2* was released on Xbox 360, PS3 and Wii on November 18, Mickey Mouse's birthday. The game's official price is \$49.99, but you can pick it up for \$39.99 on amazon.com. The voice cast includes Bret Iwan (Mickey), Frank Welker (Oswald), Cary Elwes (Gremlin Gus), Jim Cummings (Pete), Tony Anselmo (Animatronic Donald) and Tress MacNeille (Animatronic Daisy) and songs by Jim Dooley and Mark Himelstein.



Building a Beguiling Bengal Tiger

VFX supervisor Bill Westenhofer discusses some of the mind-blowing visual effects of Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*. by Thomas J. McLean

Life of Pi is not a movie about mathematics, but numbers played a big role in creating the stunning visual effects for director Ang Lee's adaptation of Yann Martel's best-selling novel.

"If I was a numerologist, I blew it by 10 days because I was on the project 3.18 years and it should have been 3.14!" says Bill Westenhofer, visual effects supervisor on the movie. *Life of Pi* follows a young man from India who is traveling to Canada when his ship sinks and he is stranded alone on a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Pi, played by new actor Suraj Sharma, struggles to survive his extreme situation and his boat mate on an extraordinary 227-day journey.

Westenhofer and his crew at Rhythm & Hues were an obvious choice for Lee, having done realistic looking animals on movies such as *Babe: Pig in the City*, *Cats & Dogs* and *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It was Aslan,

the regal lion created for Narnia, that brought the Oscar-winning director to Rhythm & Hues in 2009 with one question: Would a digital character look more real in stereoscopic 3-D?

"We didn't know, so that was a good question," says Westenhofer. "He asked us to take a shot of Aslan—and he was adamant about

"We've been asked to make digital animals in the past and try to make them as real as possible—then they sing or they dance or they do something that is obviously fake. But here is a tiger who was going to be a tiger. So if we ever had a chance to fool our colleagues, this was it."

—Life of Pi's vfx supervisor Bill Westenhofer

not changing a thing, just rendering the second eye—and we'll look at it in stereo and we'll see if it improves it or makes it look fake."

Lee liked both that his instructions were followed and the quality

of the result, landing Westenhofer the gig as vfx supervisor on the stereoscopic 3-D shoot.

With the tiger playing so large a role in the story, he was the first obvious effects challenge. "We've been asked to make digital animals in the past and try to make them as real as possible—then they sing or they dance or they do something that is obviously fake," says Westenhofer. "But here is a tiger who was going to be a tiger. So if we ever had a chance to fool our colleagues, this was it."

The process began by gathering a huge amount of reference and relying on tiger experts, such as Thierry Le Portier, a French trainer who



Ang Lee

Building the digital version of Richard Parker took about a year, starting with a simple model of a tiger that was lined up with footage and photos of King in action and tweaked until it fit. The reference also provided all the tiger's fur, with the digital model ending up with 10 million hairs.

Principal photography of the raft sequences was done at a tank in Taiwan, with Le Portier providing real tigers for as many sequences as possible. In all, the real tigers were in 14 percent of the shots; the rest were digital.

"While we were shooting other stuff, Erik [De Boer, senior animation supervisor] was in with the tigers and shot incredible reference, like super close-ups of the paws rolling, what the pads would

provided animals for films such as *Gladiator*. One of Le Portier's tigers, named King, had a particularly regal look that appealed to Lee, who selected him as the main model for Richard Parker.



An Ocean of FX: Westenhofer and the R&H team provided tons of water effects and plenty of other digital critters besides Pi's Bengal boatmate.

do when the claws momentarily emerge during the walk cycle and tiny details of how the skin was moving," Westenhofer says.

"From an animation standpoint, even if your intention is to be as animalistic as possible, it's so easy to subconsciously anthropomorphize things," says Westenhofer. "We found for every shot a reference clip or a combination of clips even from the stuff we shot or from documentary footage and said, this is what we're going to base this shot on, and we showed Ang and he agreed."

The crew also relied on Le Portier, who would look at and comment on footage to make sure it looked real.

"We would get approval from Ang on the shot and then spend another one or two weeks going in and doing just the tiny little bits of stuff, like the legs crunching and the paws and the toes moving and little twitches in the face," he says.

The other animals on the lifeboat were mostly digital as well—a hyena, a zebra and an orangutan mother with her baby.

There also is an island full of meerkats, all of which were virtual. "It's a combination of hand-animated stuff and Massive," says Westenhofer.

The second huge challenge, which was less obvious at the start, was creating convincing digital wa-



ter for so many shots.

As with the animals, the standard for reference was held high on the digital water. The production worked with Steve Callahan, an oceanographer who survived 76 days afloat on the ocean, as a consultant on both the story and the way the ocean moves. Lee also took the crew out on a Taiwanese coast guard cutter into rough night waters to get reference for the sequence in which Pi's ship sinks.

"In the storm sequences, they used a full simulation for the waves so the entire surface was a fluid sim creating these storm force gale, 30-foot tall waves. For the calmer stuff, we ended up using a more procedural approach."

The crew developed a library of about 60 different water looks, with Westenhofer saying it took anywhere from a week to three months to get a look to feel right.

They also benefited from a grid painted on the tank that could be used to measure wave frequency and amplitude and accurately recreated and matched up.

The project also tapped the resources of Moving Picture Company for the ship-sinking sequence, while Lola VFX helped make Pi look more gaunt and thin toward the end of his journey. Crazy Horse Effects did digital matte paintings, while Look FX contributed some compositing and yU+Co did some work on assembling montages in stereo. BUF did the tiger vision sequence, originally meant to have a watercolor look to it before becoming a bit more realistic. Other houses working on the movie include Legacy Effects, Christov Effects and Design and Halon Entertainment.

Stereoscopic 3-D added an extra wrinkle to the process. "It's just unforgiving, especially on the compos-

iting side," Westenhofer says. "It's got to be absolutely perfect or you just see these little stereo things."

There were 690 vfx shots out of 960 total in the movie, both of which are telling numbers, Westenhofer says. The former shows how prominent effects are in the movie and the latter shows those shots were unusually long—a product of both Lee's preferences as a director and avoiding too many rapid cuts in 3-D.

"We had more than 2,000 frame shots in this film than I've worked on in my entire career," he says. "Quite often, we'd have to blend between takes, especially in some of the storm and action sequences. So the shots are actually comprised of six different takes that are blended together at key moments."

Working on the movie was a lot of hard work, but Westenhofer says the artistic results exceeded his expectations. "Each shot, we would sit down with Ang about what kind of day it was and looked through our library and he'd set up a mood," he says. "What was great about this was that it was the first time that I really felt we could create art through visual effects. It sounds clichéd, but it really felt like every shot was looked at with an artistic view."

Fox released *Life of Pi* in theaters nationwide last month. It opens in the U.K. on December 20.



Adventures in 3-D Stereography

Savannah College of Art and Design leads the way in offering courses on stereoscopic filmmaking and imaging. by Ellen Wolff

Those who attended the 15th annual Savannah Film Festival this fall might have seen something new in the theater at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). The private, non-profit school, which hosts the festival at its Georgia campus, has partnered with the 3-D cinema company RealD as SCAD's exclusive provider. The implications for students are notable: a professional-grade theater to screen the images they produce in stereoscopic courses that are already underway.

Joerg Schodl, who teaches the Stereoscopic Filmmaking course in SCAD's film program, cautions that while we shouldn't expect to see a full-blown 3-D student festival any time soon, SCAD definitely will use the new theater to showcase student work. "This is very new," remarks Schodl. "We're waiting for software that will permit student films to be transcoded into the necessary file for RealD projection.

But I do hope that by the end of the spring quarter we'll have a compilation of student work to screen there."

"[A lot of students] think that 3-D means just shooting the same things with two cameras. A lot of educating has to be done outside of the stereoscopic classroom to make the students understand that shooting in 3-D is a whole different ballgame."

**— Joerg Schodl,
Stereoscopic Filmmaking instructor at SCAD**



All images courtesy SCAD

Schodl brings an experienced perspective to these expectations, since he has taught the Stereoscopic Filmmaking course twice before. "But this is the first quarter where we actually have all the equipment in place. We needed the digital projection side but also the digital acquisition equipment." Schodl, who earned his M.F.A. in Cinematography at the American Film Institute, explains, "SCAD purchased a new beam-splitter rig from Britain's Genustech, and high-end Sony F3 cameras. The equipment that our students are using to shoot 3-D with one single rig comes close to a cost of \$100,000."

SCAD students typically take courses in pre- and post-production techniques as well as lighting and digital cinematography before getting their hands on this equipment in the Stereoscopic Filmmaking class. But as Schodl observes, "To get the ball rolling, we had to loosen the prerequisites somewhat, because there are a lot of students who are unaware of what is really going on. They think that 3-D means just shooting the same things with two cameras. A lot of educating has to be done outside of the stereoscopic classroom to make the students understand that shooting in

3-D is a whole different ballgame."

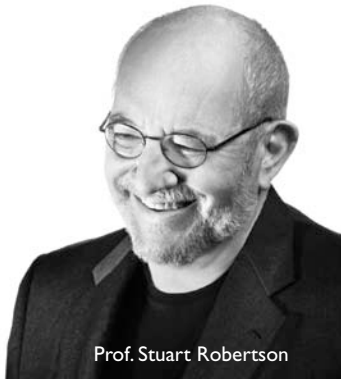
SCAD's commitment to teaching stereoscopy also extends to its visual effects program, which includes a course in Stereoscopic Imaging taught by Stuart Robertson, an Oscar winner for the visual effects in *What Dreams May Come*.

"My class requires that students have the ability to generate stereo images or do a 2D to 3-D conversion," says Robertson. "They need to know about theater space, and cutting off the frame in the appropriate places. Once they know the basic principles, it then becomes all about artistry."

Robertson notes that his course isn't about photographing visual effects elements stereoscopically, but rather teaching students how to handle those elements in post. "For example, we might get two sets of back plates and we'll need to do a green-screen composite with them. It's very challenging, especially when we have to paint stuff out." SCAD has acquired software packages which support 3-D post processing, including the latest versions of Adobe After Effects and Premiere, and the plug-in Ocula for The Foundry's compositing package Nuke.

Robertson sees the popularity of stereoscopy as an evolutionary step and not a leap into alien terrain. "Our students need to understand the things that could be applied to *either* a stereo or a mono movie. That's the important part. Stereo represents a further extension of skills that have evolved and continue to evolve." However, he has no doubt that the demand for graduates with stereo skills will continue to rise. "SCAD is very much industry-focused, and our graduates have to be able to work within a production environment. As stereo becomes more and more embedded in the industry, we have to make sure that we're addressing it."

The results of SCAD's foray into stereo will initially be seen in projects by both undergraduate and graduate students. As Schodl explains, "A senior thesis film will be shot in 3-D at an old Spanish



Prof. Stuart Robertson

fortress in St. Augustine, Florida. It's the first project using our brand new rig, so I'll be going down there to supervise and make sure that students aren't breaking anything! You've got to think that when they drive off to a film location, in the back of their truck there's easily half a million dollars of gear."

Schodl himself has volunteered to photograph a graduate thesis film that

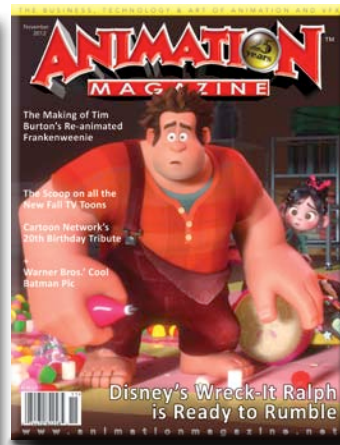
will include significant green-screen effects and CG. "Possibly at next year's film festival it will screen in the RealD theater."

Stereoscopic education is still a work in progress, but Schodl believes, "We are pushing the envelope. I've heard that there are some similar courses at a school in Paris, but I'm not aware of other schools taking the extra steps that SCAD is taking. We've invested a lot—and we're not done yet."

For more info, visit www.scad.edu.

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Ellen Wolff is an award-winning journalist who specializes in animation, vfx and education.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

Rastamouse

Mi day starts at Nuff Song



No matter whaa gwaan,
it bare important dat
we mek time to rehearse.

Den it's off to school...



Recently mi been doin' plenty
ah work wid we fans. Scratchy
an' Zoomer have bin helpin' wid
mi Rocksteady Reggae School.

Later...



When mi visit London
mi like to check in wid mi
friends in da music biz...

...an' mek sure dat mi
second album deal is all
sorted an' ting!



Sometimes we get a call from da Prez
askin' fi we help in solvin' some bare
excitin' mysteries. When dat's all
sorted, den we get pon da stage to play...



...some wicked riddims. Irie man!

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